



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600069209W











THE LONG SLIPPERS—PAGE 236.

CURIOUS  
STORIES AND TRADITIONS  
OF  
SCOTTISH LIFE.

WILLIAM P. NISBET,  
LONDON AND GLASGOW.

DAVID STREET,  
GLASGOW.





THE LEO KLOTZ—JUNE 28

CURIOUS  
STORIED TRADITIONS  
OF  
SCOTTISH LIFE.

BY  
ALEXANDER LEIGHTON,  
EDITOR, AND ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE "BORDER TALES."

*EDINBURGH:*  
WILLIAM P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.  
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.  
1860.

249. u. 509.



---

*Ballantyne & Company, Printers, Edinburgh.*

## PROLUSION.

---

IT is a blissful thing when an author, on sitting down to compose a book, can, like the ingenious collector of "The Traditions of Edinburgh," say to himself, with that complacent smile which sometimes, on the bidding of a happy thought, plays round a man's lips in the recess of his study,—"It is now my pleasant duty to hand down this work to posterity." That condition of confidence in the present, and hope of the future, it has never been my fortune to enjoy, as much perhaps from some defect of mental constitution, as from doubts I have always entertained of that mystic personage, posterity. Not that I doubt his gratitude, with him who said, in answer to one urging an act which would benefit those destined to come after him,—“What has posterity done for me?” or with Sir Isaac Newton, who, solicited to give some other immortal thoughts to the world, replied, that he had never seen any

thing in human nature to satisfy him that he was under any obligation to help it; but simply, that I have always considered that personage as whimsical, changeable, and often contemptuous. Nor am I without justification; for have we not seen him in our own day, when he has assumed the form of our generation, kicking his heels at the ancients as a set of musty old gentlemen—logical puppies, like Aristotle—wild sceptics, like Gorgias Leontin—tiresome haranguers, like Demosthenes—or smutty play-writers, like Aristophanes? All which one might probably account for upon some principle of a love of novelty; but we see him adhering to no rule, insomuch as every now and then he falls into a fit of literary antiquarianism, getting wild under the enthusiasm of a discovery made by some Cardinal Mayo, of certain old authors who have been “written over” by another, merely for the sake of the price of the sheepskin to which their immortality was committed.

Despairing of having any pleasant intercourse with one so whimsical, if not contemptuous, I have notwithstanding tried to discover wherein he is to any extent consistent; and it seems to me that there are three kinds of books to which, less or more, he is always kind: those containing history, which may be turned to account—those of

ballads, which he loves to sing—and those with pages traced by mysteries, which engage his love of the unseen. In regard to the two first, I have no chance; but as to the third, I have sometimes thought, though still under the fear of the *perituræ parcite chartæ*, and the *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*, that I might adventure to tickle the susceptible sides of the old Proteus, and get him, even with a sneer, to take me up and be amused by me for a few moments. Yet, even this I would not have attempted, if I had not myself been always fond of this kind of literature—yea, from my earliest remembrances I was a hanger upon the lips of grandams, and a worshipper of the goddess with the dark palla. Then my chance is the greater that my mysteries are not of that most formidable if not terrible kind so beloved by the Germans—theological, cosmological, or pneumatological—but simply and naturally anthropological, in which very unlettered beings will always be interested.

That I have in my searches into the books of adjournal, reports of trials, and the hidden souls of detectives, sought for traces of romance may be inferred from the nature of my subject, and may be the hope of my conciliating the personage to whom I have alluded. The only thing I have to distrust is, my having an unfortunate tendency to

get into the error of Old Mortality, who, though in himself a very romantic character, was signally unromantic in his labours among the tombs, where he must have been held as ungrateful to ghouls and ghosts. The sharpening of the traces of these old hieroglyphics under the skulls and cross-bones to which they are so appropriate, was a low touch of utilitarianism, perfectly unbecoming in so great an admirer of old headstones and grave-slabs, where antiquity sat enshrined amidst the relics of the past. Yet, I confess myself, however unwillingly, open to the same charge, having applied the chisel to half-obliterated characters, obscured by green mould, and replete with suggestions and fanciful constructions so congenial to mystery. This, I fear, will be viewed as one of my greatest offences, not only in the estimation of Quidnunc, but of the aforesaid Quidante; but if happily I may be wrong, and the former give me hopes of encouragement for this labour of love, I may repeat my mask-dance, reversing the quotation of one who was really great in this department, and saying rather—

“ If it *is* weel bobbet,  
We ’ll bob it again.”

YORK LODGE, TRINITY.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE WHITE SCALP, . . . .	I
THE TEN OF DIAMONDS, . . . .	33
SERGEANT DAVIES' GHOST, . . . .	70
THE CHANCE QUESTION, . . . .	106
THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE MICE, . . . .	132
THE KNIFE-THRUST IN THE DARK, . . . .	166
THE SCORED BACK, . . . .	204
THE LONG SLIPPERS, . . . .	233
THE DIAMOND EYES, . . . .	266





## The White Scalp.

---

THE source of my materials for the account I am now to give—marvellous, and, according to moderate views of human nature, scarcely conceivable—was an acquaintance, Mr George S——n, who, at the time when the occurrence threw the town of D—— into an almost unprecedented excitement, was connected with an office where he had opportunities of knowing more than could be ascertained by mere gossips. It happened that, a good many years afterwards, he and I were walking along that street which leads to the landing-place for boats from Fife, called the Craig. On coming to a line of low workshops, much dilapidated-looking, covered with red tiles, many of them broken, and presenting small square windows, some of which were only partly glazed, he pointed to one of the shops, and said—

“There is David M——s’ smithy.”

The name struck me at the time with that kind of resuscitated familiarity we often experience when some chord of remembrance is suddenly touched, and there come a flash of confused images all clus-

tering round a point which is the one idea we wish to realise.

"Oh, the white scalp," said I.

"The white scalp!" echoed he. "It is strange you should have got these words, too, for I thought that they were used to designate the case only by myself. I don't think the term was used by any of the counsel at the trial, nor by the witnesses. They said only that M——s was struck on the back of the head; but 'the white scalp' implies something more, as you doubtless know."

"I am aware," said I; "but are not all white men's bald heads white?"

"Yes, less or more," said he, with a laugh; "but they are generally filled with brains much too wise to permit of their possessors placing them in positions where the light reflected from them will court a forehammer to knock these brains out."

"It was certainly a barbarous case," said I; "not, however, merely indicating vulgar brutality, in which sense it could have no interest for any rational being. Nothing is more removed from the real feeling of romance than coarse violence. We see that every day. It is the passion or motive that gives character to the deed; and there is only often needed a little of the tantalising of coy mystery to invest the transaction with that peculiar interest which is so catching even to very bald-headed men."

"But still, I say, the folly is, that bald heads

should make themselves the subjects of romance," he rejoined. "I knew well the woman M——n,\* who figured as paramour in the case. She was a showy, meretricious trollop, very apt at catching the eyes of old men of a certain temperament, and therefore the more successful in her designs against the conjugal fidelity of the respectable master-smith. I may say, that decayed beauties have an art of enchantment which the young, though they may possess it, are not conscious of. It is the old instinct matured and formalised by stratagem; and we have heard of wonderful instances of this art, even in very ancient *belles*; as in that of the woman Rudd, who exercised such a power over her victims, as to bring two of them to the gallows. But it would seem M——n was early trained to blandishments. She had been a tambourine musician in a travelling caravan, as well as a dancer in the front boards, decked out in Dutch gold tinsel and spangles. Nor had she been without some attractions—not altogether derived from art, but still further removed from feminine grace. She had been the admired of three husbands in succession, and for a period two at a time; and had so far outlived her youthful charms, whatever they might be, that she had at the time of her intercourse with M——s a son grown up to manhood."

\* Her maiden name was Cr——g; but although she was several times married, she was always known by the name of her first husband, M——n.

"If M——s' fate was terrible," said I, "hers was scarcely less so, in having had killed in the embrace of her lasciviousness the victim of her fascination. Did you never observe something wonderful in the mechanism of Nature's institutions, inso-much that there are laid by her, as it were, secret traps, whereby every one who pushes passion or instinct beyond her statutory bounds is caught? I do not mean that they suffer merely in their bodies from exhaustion or disease, but from some other source, the connexion of which with the gratification of their passions cannot be seen till it is in operation."

"I have often observed this," replied my friend; "and it was never more strongly exemplified than in the strange history of David M——s and Meg M——n. It was never known, I think, how he and she became acquainted. Some say that he had seen her in her earlier period, blooming with rouge, and sparkling with tin spangles; but others say, that it was long after she had become too old for this youthful work that they met, by chance, in the characters of searchers for the same object. I cannot decide; but it is probable that the old man's money was an element in her affection. 'Like,' they say, 'draws to like,' but it is because the objects they love are common to both; and in the case of these unfortunate and criminal lovers, the likeness was singular in another and a very different respect, for the one had been the husband of three wives, and

the other the wife of three husbands, and both had grown-up children."

"I have a curiosity to look into the smithy," said I.

And we entered. It is the identification of the spot that forms the charm which forces us to place our eyes upon the scene of some strange event. One of the workmen, who had been an apprentice to M——s, had himself been curious enough to keep an exact remembrance of the very part of the floor where the two had on that evening sat down. There was nothing there but the soddened clay, yet I could not for a time keep my eyes off it. How strange! for we can find no reason that is final cause for it. I have never known even a shrewd guess made on the subject, if all we poor, blind philosophers can say be not summable up in the mere useless observation, that it is part of Nature's economy in diversifying objects for man's interest; but a wonderful and inscrutable economy, to derive pleasure, yea, a romantic pleasure, from surveying a spot of earth where a fiend in the shape of an immortal being rushes like a tiger, or crawls like a serpent, to deprive his fellow-being of life.

Amid the blazing of the bellows'-blown coom, and the echoing sounds of the hammer on the anvil, my friend whispered in my ear, "Can you realise a vision here?"

"I will try," said I.

"The hour is near to six," he began, still in a low whisper. "The same flaming fires, the same

clangs from the iron, the same smoke ; but the night is falling, and the fires are keeping up an unequal conflict with the increasing darkness without. David M——s is himself working at the anvil with his bald head ; the still strong, muscular arm that had so often brung down the heavy forehammer is wielding the instrument which is to be used next hour for taking away his life—his face begrimed with soot and smoke. Yet his eye is clear and twinkling in the red glare of the coom ; for his fancy is active in another direction : he is to meet the quondam show-dancer, her of the red turban, of the braided sky-blue bodice, and the spangled skirt and red slippers, in that same place where he is working. He is to taste of the sweets of a purloined pleasure from one herself a thief in the same way ; and to him, as to many, this is the zest which makes lasciviousness pleasant by secrecy and mystery. Six o'clock comes—the fires are extinguished, and the noises cease. The men and boys go home to their chaste wives and loving mothers ; so, too, does the hoary satyr, David himself, go home to his wife, to get himself washed, to take his tea, and act the liar in his own home, in her presence and that of his children. Throw in a trace of fancy as a coruscation among these facts, and suppose one of his children, whom he is fondling for the last time on earth, gets on his knee and kisses him. But where is the use for poetical exaggerations, where there is so much of reality that is

charged with colours and shadows peculiar to the workings of fiction! He leaves his wife and family, and goes out. The hour is not yet come, and he hangs about the workshop in the deep gloaming, avoiding the figures of men. He has no reason to think there is any watch upon him—that some one is dogging him, and, while avoiding him, marking his own stealthy movements. At length he espies the figure of a woman, as she espies him, and they meet and whisper for a few minutes; nor does he suspect that some one—a young man or a middle-aged woman—has found means to enter the workshop, and leave the door as he or she found it. Certain it is, that there is a person there, whether male or female, secreted in the corner behind these bellows, whose breathing is correated for secrecy, and whose eyes, betraying the light of passion stern and implacable as a bloodhound's, might require to be shaded to conceal the light that is shining in them."

"You are working up," said I, interrupting him for a moment, "for effect, and these noises and lights aid you by their contrasts to your whispered mysteries."

"Not a bit of exaggeration, and for no effect, greater than what belongs to peculiar actions wrought in certain positions, and under singular circumstances. Could it have been possible to divine the motives, at least the real purpose, of that secreted person, beyond the suspicion that there



was a wish for mere detection, and perhaps some revenge of a natural and not uncommon kind? But the eye, if seen, would have betokened something very different. The door is heard by that secreted person to open stealthily;—the expected David M——s it is who comes in and stands in the shop for a little in silent expectation; and in a few minutes after comes the female,—that very woman of power enough to be the means of all this mystery, by her arts and blandishments, but with no help now from her meretricious dress, for she is wrapped up in a cloak to conceal her. They are seen and heard by the watcher esconsed in the corner; they whisper to each other—the satyr and the quondam show-dancer. In all but their conversation there is a dead silence, and in all but a moonbeam that steals through the square window behind them there is darkness: but that moonbeam is reflected from the white scalp. The man or the woman steals out from behind the bellows—a forehammer is in the firm hand, the white scalp is the mark—the hammer falls with a smith's-arm force on the scalp. There is a death-scream. A corpse is laid on the floor, and the woman's face is splashed with blood and brains. She stands for a moment, shuddering, then flees, nor waits a single instant to try to ascertain by whom that terrible act was done."

"A horrible picture!" said I.

"And true," rejoined he; "true, and yet how

unlike these colours are to the internal touch of experience, as in these three parties concerned in the tragedy—revenge in one, the pang of a sudden death in the very heart of the delirium of pleasure in the second, fear pursued by crime in the third.”

“Then,” said I, “if it had not been for the light reflected from the white scalp, the crime, in this form at least, would probably not have been perpetrated.”

“Probably not,” he replied, as we began to move out of the smithy, to continue our walk and conversation.

“It seems difficult to know,” said I, “how all this could be ascertained. It was performed in the dark, and every one of the parties had a strong interest to keep the secret. Mrs M——s, who was tried at Perth for the murder, would admit nothing.”

“But there were circumstances that spoke very plainly. The hammer lay there, telling its connexion with the shattered skull. Why was M——s there at that hour in the dark? Then there were people, however confusedly they gave their evidence, who saw the woman M——n escaping, and another figure, who could not be identified, following in a short time. Then the amour between M——s and her was known even before the murder. It became a much more nice point to ascertain the murderer. There was nothing to trace by, no article left as connected with any one. It

is true, however, that about this spot, where we are in this street, called Couttie's Wynd, a hat\* was found at daylight in the gutter. That hat formed the foundation of many theories. Considerate people viewed it as an important circumstance. No one but a drunk person, or one pursued by fear, ever leaves his hat in a gutter. Even the drunk man has an instinct about him which generally enables him to regain this article of dress; for to go home bareheaded has a shame about it which even drunkenness, very far gone, cannot surmount. Then a drunk man so far-gone could scarcely have passed along so narrow and crowded a wynd at any hour without calling attention to him; and even if he did drop his hat in a quiet way and escape notice, he would not be ashamed to claim it, at least by a messenger, next day, if he knew where it was to be found. Now, this hat was made the subject of much conversation, and yet was never claimed. Next, it is to be observed that the spot where it was found is not more than forty or fifty good strides from the scene of the murder, and the wynd is, of the five streets leading to or past the smithy, the only passage whereby the murderer could expect to have any chance of passing rapidly without observation—being dark and much frequented, and not leading, like three of the others, to

\* This hat, by one report, was said to have been M—s', but that was improbable. I have followed the more likely version.

the sea. The only observation made at the time as contravening these strong presumptions was what I heard from Bailie T——, that the fact of the hat being once supposed to be connected with the murder, would prevent any innocent person from coming forward and claiming it. Now, I think this a very poor answer, the presumption being rather the opposite way, viz., that any one conscious of having no concern with so barbarous an affair, would not have hesitated to come forward and put an end to a suspicion which was calculated to lead the authorities astray, and might relieve any *female*—and Mrs M——s was suspected from the beginning—from the imputation of the guilt. Unclaimed, however, as it was, it did *not* enter at all as an element having any weight in the calculations against the widow.”

“At first sight,” said I, “there seems to be very little to be made of the hat—nothing to quash suspicion, with anything to support it, against Mrs M——s; but, I confess, when you look narrowly to it in the way you have done, it is calculated to suggest some considerations very serious. The only supposition you have not properly answered is, that a drunk man might have consented rather to lose his hat than be suspected of being drunk.”

“Then his shame of being merely drunk, would be held to overcome his interest in the triumph of justice?” replied he. “I can’t go along with you.

I was at the beginning impressed with the conviction, very young as I was, that there was more meaning in this waif hat than is often found in hats. Yet it did not take the authorities off the scent of the *bonnet*. Mrs M——s was ruthlessly laid hold of, and, in her weeds, lodged in Dundee jail—the tears for her husband running down over cheeks burning with a public shame of being suspected as his murderer.”

“I fear there is something wrong in the constitution of the ministerial department of our criminal practice,” said I. “There’s something even terrible in the idea that one man—not always, certainly, thanks to politics, necessarily gifted with a superabundance of either brains or discretion—should have the power, after reading a precognition got up by a man, a fiscal paid by blood-money—for what otherwise are his fees paid by the exchequer—to drag any man or woman in this kingdom before a court, to be tried for his or her life. I say nothing of the cases of *innocent* persons known to have been *criminally* hanged. I speak of the mere ordeal. I remember a story told often by my father, where a relative of his own figured as a victim. His case stands yet in the books of adjournal, as a blazoned disgrace to the authorities of the time. The gentleman’s wife, a nervous, excitable woman, used his razor, without his consent or knowledge, below the chin, and where a beautiful blue-veined neck shewed nothing of the hirsute. The woman

bled to death in the drawing-room, which had a window used as the means, by a step, of getting to a *parterre*. He was in the garden, from which he saw his wife, whom he loved tenderly, but whom he had often secretly great difficulty to manage in consequence of her constitutional tendency, fall, and rushing in, found her lying in a pool of blood. A doctor came too late to save her. When she died, the doctor, more probably from mere curiosity than any suspicion, inquired how she got the razor."

"‘Is it one of yours?’ he said to the husband.

"‘Yes,’ was the reply; ‘but I always keep them locked up. She must have got the key of my dressing-case.’

"‘I wonder where it is,’ said the doctor.

"‘Good God,’ exclaimed the husband, searching his pocket, and drawing it out, ‘it is here! Let us see, is the dressing-case locked or open?’ and running to the bed-room, he came back with it. ‘It is locked.’

"‘Locked!’ responded the doctor.

"‘Locked; we must ascertain how she had got it opened.’

"And so they went a-searching, but no trace could be got of the key.

"The doctor was, in a few days after the funeral, visited by the fiscal, whose ledger was always a ready receptacle of thirteen and fourpences, more of which he would have spent if there had been

more nervous women in the county, and the doctor told him the circumstance concerning the key. The two servants were next booked. They were honest girls. The interrogation went somewhat in this way:—

“ ‘Did you know that Mr F—— always kept the key of his dressing-box?’ ”

“ ‘Always; and I found it always locked when I went up to the dressing-closet.’ ”

“ ‘Did your master and mistress agree well?’ ”

“ ‘No, sir. Both I and my neighbour often heard noises as of quarrels, and sometimes screams, from my mistress, as if my master had been treating her cruelly. We thought, too, that he tried to prevent them being heard, by attempting to hold her throat or cover her mouth.’ ”

“ ‘And how often would this occur?’ ”

“ ‘Two or three times in a month.’ ”

“And thus the prosecutor filled his book by question and answer. Nor was such evidence permitted to undergo due qualification by the statement of the gentleman in his examination, that his wife was subject to nervous fits, which he wished to conceal from the servants; that, in consequence, he often applied a gentle force to her, restraining her shaking limbs, and even putting his hand gently over her mouth, all which appeared to her at the time, and during the attack, as attempts against her life, whereupon her cries were increased, sometimes carrying on their wings the word ‘help.’ Of all

which she was in her healthier moods ashamed, and for all which she loved him the more tenderly. But then the doctor who had given his testimony about the key, was a new comer in place of the dead old hand, who could have spoken of her peculiar diathesis. Mr F—— was apprehended, tried, acquitted, and killed. In three months afterwards, he fell under the sticking barb shot by a Lord-Advocate."

"I concur," said my friend, "that there is something here wrong. The law, which is said to be justice, becomes injustice; whose sword, unlike the fabled Delphic one, has poison on one side, without the antidote on the other. So, recurring to David M——s' case, the widow was dragged from the bosom of her family, and indicted to stand her trial for the murder of her husband, at the Circuit Court of Perth. The decision was come to with the usual rapidity, and, as the issue turned out, the usual want of judgment. Men are men, but one man is not a council of men; and the individual who has thus the lives and fortunes of our countrymen in his hands—I mean in reference to murdering them, or ruining them by a trial, even where they are acquitted—does truly, the moment after his fiat for apprehension is issued, commit himself to hang, while he commits the prisoner to be hanged. He must justify his first leap, and his beagles must bark at the sound of his tally-ho, and the lash of his whip. The trial becomes a case where official duties



pass into private passions, and every subordinate works up the crown testimony with an ardour only equalled by the pettifogger who fights for his costs out of the sticks and traps of a garret or a cellar."

"It does certainly occur to me," said I, "that in this extraordinary case, the Lord-Advocate exhibited a want of a knowledge of human nature in seizing so suddenly on the widow, to make—it might be—innocence in tears undergo the fiery agony of a trial for life. Independently of the man's hat, so suggestively lying unclaimed in the midst of an excitement which carried the startling news into every nook and corner of the town, and to every ear in every house, there were strong, I may say more than strong, presumptions adverse to the supposable guilt of Mrs M——s. Every man knows well, and every woman knows better, that jealousy is the offspring of love, and that, where there is no jealousy, there is seldom revenge. A woman who does not love a man, and consequently cannot be jealous of him, in place of being stung to the quick by his infidelity, will rather, if she have any vagrant loves on her side—and in such cases she seldom wants them—wink at his amours to excuse her own. At least, the thought of killing him never enters her brain. But admitting the love, and consequently the jealousy, and, if you will, a consequent desire of revenge, against whom is that passion directed? It is the paramour she flies at first, if not alone. It is through her punish-

ment she aims the blow against her husband, who is still, by our supposition, the object of her affection ; and so sure are we of our foundations here, that I believe if the paramour were, upon the instant of being visited by the wife's fury, to turn against her husband, the wife would fly to his defence, and carry him off as the redeemed hope of her love. Then her anger against the paramour is satisfied, in nine cases out of ten, by a rug of the hair, or the luxury of letting off a volley of 'sluts,' 'limmers,' or 'blackguards,'—a visitation somewhat different from the deathblow of a forehammer. But to suppose that that instrument, to be grasped, and swung, and brought down upon the white scalp, or curly crop, or smooth locks of her husband, could be the resource of a woman's desire, at an instant when her very anger is the proof of her affection, is against all the known laws of human nature. Doubtless, in many cases of passion, we do not know where 'the flee may stang,' but we are here aided by the actual statistics of crime and our daily experience. When did you ever hear of a woman killing her husband through pure jealousy? The poisonings, which please her better than forehammers, have always something else at their sources in her heart—hatred, engendered by love for another, and the desire to be free for the gratification of that other love."

"Why," said my friend, "the whole presumption in the case of the trial, at which I was present, was held by the crown counsel to be the other way.

But for the supposition that it belongs to the nature of woman to slay by any means—arsenic or axe, henbane or hammer—the husband who is untrue to her, the evidence, strong as it was in one sense—for the ferreting was cunning and assiduous—would have amounted to nothing. I admit that the evidence was in every sense strange and almost unaccountable, except upon the principle so well known to all of us, that murder becomes a kind of moral lens, through which the perceptions are thrown upon the camera of the imagination, and become lurid pictures. Let a witness, dignified by being a party to testify in such a case, get his head in the cloud of mystery, and Heaven only knows what he may say ; but let him, at same time, be under the impression that he is the destined person, in the hands of Providence, to clear it up, and especially let him have some presumption in his mind that a certain person, and no other person, must, by his view of human motives, be the murderer, and you will get almost any wild evidence out of him. I have said the evidence against Mrs M——s was strange. Even I myself was staggered by it. It was sworn to, that on that night she was on the watch for detection, that she dogged M——s. She knew the mode of opening the smithy door, and where the hammers lay, so as to lay her hand upon one in the dark. She was even seen retreating, like a criminal, from the smithy, after the deed was done. Then where was she

when her husband was discovered, mangled, brainless, bloody, and with disordered clothes? Was she there, to be the first to find her husband, to weep and tear her hair in the ordinary fashion—a fashion not, even in the case of a detected infidelity, to be excluded? No; she was not there. She was at home, calm and undisturbed, after all that slouching, and watching, and dogging her husband and the stage-dancer.”

“‘That woman will be hanged,’ said I, to a person sitting next to me in the court, ‘if the jury are in the humour, and can get rid of the presumption so strongly urged by her counsel.’

“‘I fear it,’ said he, shaking his head; ‘and yet I think her innocent.’

“But where was she of the Dutch gold and the spangles?” inquired I; “you have said nothing of her.”

“Oh, she could not be found; and the absence of that woman is another strange feature of this prosecution. The case behaved, in her absence—the only person who could speak to the *actus trucidendi*—to be thrown back upon circumstances liable in all cases, and particularly in one where the darkness of the night interfered with perception, to exaggeration and mystification. But, still stranger, in a case where there was so much of the marvellous, it was the very absence of this woman which, taken in one view—that is, in the view that she could have spoken to the forehammer blow

without being able to ascertain the hand whereby the instrument was used—saved Mrs M——s from the gallows. After the witnesses were examined, a deep impression prevailed that the judge would charge against her, and so he did, to the effect, at least, that no other than the prisoner could have done the deed ; but then, as no mortal there could tell how, or for what reason, the blow was given, he was entitled to hold by the possibility—enough in the circumstances—that she might have inflicted it in self-defence. Yes, it was upon this burnt thread by which the fate of Mrs M——s was hung, and the strength of which saved her from that thicker hempen one which, by the wishes of the public prosecutor, was to hang her. The jury, thus cautioned, acquitted her. What then ? The same vehicle that conveyed her to her family conveyed the reporters for the public press, and her character was committed to the editorial pen, the scissors, and the paste-pot. All that array of evidence—floating motes in a misty atmosphere, with a ray of prejudice shooting through—was collected together into a consistent lump. She ought to have been hanged, only for these *verba jacta* of the judge, that it was possible she might have done this deed in self-defence. How graceful and engaging the salvo ! She would have the advantage, and merit, and grace, of being believed to be a woman who was capable of taking up a forehammer to defend herself against the slaps of a husband's hand ! The

difference was macroscopical, not microscopical, between a blow by so unfeminine an instrument, given in revenge for her injured rights in the height of a woman's passion; and one inflicted from a fear of being struck, as a husband might be supposed to strike a wife, even with the right arm of a smith, so much more muscular than the left. All this went abroad upon the broadsheets. These were everywhere. Whither could she go where they were not? What man or woman could she meet, but must either have read them or be supposed to have read them? Was there a spot in all Scotland, excepting a wild heath without a shieling among the heather, where she would not see printed, or hear whispered, or cried out, the name of Mrs M——s?"

"And who was the cause of all this—herself? the widow who mourned the death of a husband covered with shame—who had been faithful to him in return for infidelity—who had his children borne by her, to look in the face where the features of the father spoke her shame in their innocent lines—who was bereaved of one who might have been reclaimed, and who at least supported her and her children—left to the mercies of a world which was to judge her in a light even more revolting than that of an intentional and interested murderer? Not herself—she was innocent—but the Lord-Advocate, who precipitately, and against presumptions derived from the laws of nature and the experience

of mankind, dragged her to trial on evidence hounded out by men paid by the government for the very work, set forth in an account, item by item, like a grocer's bill or a tavern score. The consequences are not difficult to guess. Mrs M——s' fate was sealed. I do not know what has become of her; but, by the last accounts I heard of her, she never looked out, was a poor heart-broken creature, living under a load of misery enough to bear down to the earth at least one able and willing to wield a forehammer, where a white scalp is in the circle of its swing.

"You have brought your case to a strange termination," said I, as we sat down by the sea-shore, by which, for a time, we had been walking.

"Termination! not yet," he replied; "I have more wonderful things to say; for, to speak the truth, I view this case only as a specimen of a bad system, to be terminated as soon as possible. Our country has seen thousands of Mrs M——s' and Mr F——s, and we will have more. They are seldom heard of, these tried, uncondemned, yet condemned innocents. They hide their heads in the recesses of dark places. They are not to be seen where the sun shines equally on the rich and the poor. A few familiar faces may greet them with a smile saddened by pity, but beyond that limited circle there is no moral sunshine for them—nor do they need it long. They die soon, and, *perhaps, the sooner the better.*"

"But for all this," said I, "the Lord-Advocates and fiscals eat no less, drink no less, are not honoured the less, are not the less happy."

"Nor should they. It is the system which is at fault. The men follow their instincts like other men. If you hunger a lap-dog, it will get furious, if not ferocious."

"You said your story was not finished," said I. "Go on. I knew much of what you have told me, but not in the minute form in which I have heard it, and I long to know whether Mrs M——s was afterwards proved to be innocent."

"You shall hear," he replied: "So far as I can learn—and I confess I trust now mostly to report; but what I have to tell you was communicated by a writer in the town yonder, who had means of information superior to mine, and who had no interest to magnify or colour a transaction in which he had no part. There is no record anywhere of what occurred, whereby we can test the accuracy of what he told me; but I repeat to you, I have the most perfect reliance on his accuracy. That gentleman's name is Mr L——. It was on the occasion of a visit from him, when I was in Edinburgh, that, while sitting by the fire, and speaking on general subjects, he, as if the thought struck him on the instant, said—

"By the by, a strange thing occurred in our jail not long ago. Did you hear anything?"



“‘No,’ said I.

“‘You remember the famous case of David M——s?’

“‘Yes; but the affair has gone out of my mind. Has any discovery occurred? I have never given up the notion that that poor woman was innocent.’

“‘You remember the hat?’

“‘Yes. I always looked upon that circumstance as something deserving more attention than the sapient bailies bestowed upon it.’

“‘There were not many, however, of your way of thinking,’ said he. ‘But certainly I was of your thought. I took this view of it:—Why, in the first place, was the hat not claimed? secondly, was it not presumable that it was connected with the affair in the smithy? Suppose that it had been found twenty yards from that shop, in place of forty—the difference would not have mattered much. Suppose it had been ten, you come a little nearer a suspicion. Suppose the ten reduced to five, your suspicion increases. Then go on to three, from that to two, from that to one—what then? Oh, very suspicious indeed. Suppose, next, it had been found on the threshold of the door, you could hardly have avoided a conviction. Go further, and place it within the threshold, the difference would have been little between that and finding it alongside of the body.’

“‘A nice *sortes*.’

“‘Yes, a good example of the old fallacy. But

if it had been found within the threshold, would Mrs M——s ever have been suspected?’

“‘I think not.’

“‘Then retrace your steps back to, and up Coutties’ Wynd, at what particular spot would a sagacious prosecutor have come to the determination of apprehending Mrs M——s as the murderer? Would you have done it at the distance of one yard?’

“‘No,’ said I.

“‘At two, or three, or four?’

“‘No.’

“‘At five, or six, or seven?’

“‘He would have been getting more doubtful.’

“‘Suppose we arrive at the foot of the wynd?’

“‘More doubtful still.’

“‘So, till you get up to where it was found?’

“‘There the Lord-Advocate shewed his doubt was resolved.’


“‘Exactly; a few yards made the difference whether the woman should be degraded and ruined for life or not.’

“‘Surely it comes to this.’

“‘Well, he would have been wrong, though the hat had been found in the Cowgate, or Black’s Croft, or Scouring Burn. Did you ever hear that the quondam dancer had a son grown up and able enough to wield a smith’s forehammer?’

“‘No. If I had, I would have had even a dif-

ferent notion of the case from what I entertained when I heard the trial, because then I could have known where to look at least for a motive. I could not find that motive in Mrs M——s. I could not have found it even in the case of a competing paramour; because, although the woman could throw her glamour over the old blacksmith, who it seems was of the order of satyrs, it is not to be credited that a comparatively old and worn-out, shrivelled rag of a wretch like M——n was worth an amorous competition, far less that she could have been held by a paramour (her last husband was dead, and out of the question) in such delectable estimation that he would have risked his life for her by taking away, in so violent a manner, the life of another. But it at once appears altogether different when we come to a son. A son loves a mother not the less that she has appeared before his young vision as a goddess; nor the less that she has despoiled herself of her azure wings and wind-woven drape, and betaken herself to hodden gray, wincey, or aberdeensey; nor the less, nay, the more, that she has waxed old, even if the remembrance of these glories did not hang about her like a gorgeous vision of the past. Then, in proportion to the force of this sacred feeling—sacred in spite of the unworthiness of the object—will be the strength of the passion of revenge, when he finds that parent, by an illicit connexion, bring on herself a degradation and shame which are shared by him. Per-



haps there is no fault or crime in a mother more calculated to rouse the young wrath and hurry a son into a terrible retaliation. But the mother will still be guarded by him. It is not on her the wrath will be wreaked. Nature is too strong in him for his being moved by rebellion against the source of his being; and yet just in proportion to this limitation of his anger in one direction will be the strength of its burst on the head of him to whom the woman is viewed as a victim of stratagem or seduction. Woe be to the man who lays himself in the way of that peculiar jealousy of a son's affection! Then, is not this case of a son the very antithet of that of Mrs M——s, according to the view of human nature taken by the crown authorities? Her revenge was construed as being directed, not against the woman she hated, but against the man she loved; and by the same rule the son would slay his mother, and let her betrayer and seducer—for in the youthful estimation he is such—escape. Is it not more true, that the passion of a son's affection, with its consequent jealousy, and that of a wife's love, with its inevitable concomitant, work by the same laws; and that if Mrs M——s had been to slay, she would have slain the woman, and that if the son had been to murder, he would have murdered the man?'

“‘That is nature's law,’ said Mr L——. ‘Then what think ye?’

“‘Oh, I could almost guess.’

“‘That hat,’ he continued, ‘belonged to the show-dancer’s son.’

“‘Euge! *Dux filius facti*. I could have sworn it, the moment you mentioned she had a boy,’ cried I.

“‘It was a surprise, notwithstanding,’ said Mr L——.

“‘Yes, no doubt, to Lord-Advocates,’ said I; ‘and I hope it may prove a lesson to them in all time coming.’

“‘Men set over the public are not apt scholars, even in the alphabet of discretion,’ replied he.

“‘But how could the fact you have mentioned,’ continued I, ‘come to be known so long afterwards? Who was to prove the ownership of the hat?’

“‘He to whom it belonged.’

“‘What motive could ever have induced him, supposing him sane, to make such a confession as that?’

“‘There is a time for all of us,’ said Mr L——, ‘when the closed-up heart opens to the touch of a monitor who, though always present, is repressed by the high-strung nerve of human passion. In the case of young M——n, it was only the iron heart capable of nerving the arm to that terrible blow, that could have held encased for years, and secreted in the dungeon of his thoughts, even from that parent whom he loved, the fearful secret.’

“‘What! did his mother not know the hand that laid her paramour dead on her breast?’

“‘Some say the woman was never even suspicious of the lad. It was impossible, in the dark, to see the figure before the blow was struck; and the immediate consequences—the scream, and the change from life to death—were more than enough to take from her all power of recognition, as well as all wish to recognise. In truth, as you know, she fled instantly; and, according to general report, she was always of opinion that it was Mrs M——s who did the deed.’

“‘Yet I confess I would be inclined to the opinion,’ said I, ‘that she did at least suspect her son. It was natural that she should for ever shrink from any allusion to the subject in his presence. We might conceive that it would rather be her object to profess that she did not suspect him, if ever indeed the subject could be broached at all, except in the case of some violent quarrel overcoming all natural restraints. It was a strange condition for this loving son and mother to remain in for years—to have locked up in their hearts this secret, which they dared not utter to each other’s ears without feeling and imparting horror.’

“‘Yes, we could conceive all that in such a case as this, where the deed was the consequence of an overwhelming passion, and where the reduction to the normal state of the feelings would probably bring repentance and regret. It would, of course, be very different in the case of a preconceived, cold-blooded intention to kill.’

“‘And how, then,’ said I, ‘did the secret actually come out, when such may be conceived to be the state of the minds of M——n and her son?’

“‘It seems,’ continued Mr L——, ‘that the young lad inherited some of the outlawed propensities of the show-dancer. He got into a scrape which brought him within the arm of the law, from which he had so long escaped, as the avenger of his more aggravated deed. I do not know what his later crime or misdemeanour was, but he was apprehended and lodged in D—— jail.\* He had been, I am informed, in bad health when he entered, and required the assistance and care of his mother, whose love for him, as well as his for her, had remained unaffected by the tragedy of the smithy. He continued to get worse and worse, and his illness was accompanied by a depression of spirits, as if something weighed heavily on his heart as well as his conscience. He had often essayed to speak, and as often failed. He would fix his eye on the woman who had been the source of his dearest joys as of his direst bane. Then he would turn away his pallid face, and allow his upraised head to droop. All this had been noticed by the woman, in whom pity was not dead, and she felt for the misery she had brought upon her own offspring. How strangely does God vindicate His ways! How far away in years and conditions are

\* Some say that the lad was not in jail, but died in the Overgate. I follow Mr L——.

the effects of crime brought down on the heads of offenders against His laws! How wonderfully, for her own punishment, was this woman's life of licentiousness terminated by that very passion which she had carried to extremes! and who could have supposed that that terminating act should come against her by the agony of her own son, in the form of a murderer's penitence! Yet so it was, and as she pitied him, so did she cast upon her own head the red fires of her shame. The secret at last came.'

" 'Mother,' he said, 'I have long concealed from you something. I would like to confess it before I die, for I feel I will not live long. I did not expect to die in a jail, and less did I expect to have to tell you what I am now to say.'

"He paused for breath and strength.

" 'Do you remember that terrible night?'

"The woman was silent.

" 'That terrible night when David M——s was killed?'

"She was still silent.

" 'Well, that was the hand,' holding up his white, flaccid, shrivelled paw, 'that struck the blow.'

"She raised her head, looked up in the face of the dying lad, and, as she afterwards admitted, burst out into tears—nature's own vindicated expression, not the effect of her will, and the only one—for her tongue was parched and would utter nothing.



"After a time, when he seemed easier, she ventured to say—

"‘And do you forgive me?’

"‘Ay, now,’ he replied, ‘but only now, and never till now; I forgive everything now, but it was not so before. It changed me from what I was. I was always afraid. The finding of my hat, and the suspicion that some one saw me going in or coming out, were always my greatest fear. It was not God I feared then, but it is Him I fear now, and only Him.’

"The young man died that same evening."

## The Ten of Diamonds.

---

I CANNOT vouch for the following narrative, further than that it used to be spoken of by Mr John Rymer of Corseflatts, the narrator, as true in its essentials. I have heard, however, that it was his father who was the companion of the laird of the Moated Grange, once so noted a gambler.

I had at length, said he, reached the Moated Grange, on a visit to my friend, Græme. But since I am to speak a good deal of this place, I may as well explain that it was misnamed. There was no moat, and had been none for a hundred years; but round the old pile—hoary, and shrivelled, and palsied enough, in all conscience, for delighting the mole-eve of any antiquarian hunks—there was a visible trace of the old ditch, in a hollow covered with green sward going all round the house, which hollow was the only space clear of trees. And these trees! They stood for a mile round, like an army of giants, seventy feet high, all intent, it would seem, upon choking the poor old pile—throwing their big arms over the hollow, swinging them to

and fro, and dashing their points against the panes as the wind listed. It would come, by and by, to be a hard task for the stone and lime victim to hold its place, with its sinews of run mortar, against these tyrants of the wood. And then they were as full of noises as Babel itself—noises a thousand times more heterogeneous—croaking, chirping, screeching, cawing, whistling, billing, cooing, cuckooing. "What a place to live in," I thought, fresh as I was from town, "where, if there are noises, one knows something of their meaning—maledictory, yea, devilish as it often is, expressive of the passions of men which will never sleep! But these! what could one make of such a *tintamarre*! Nothing but the reflection—that is, if you happen to be a philosopher, which, thank God, I am not—that not one note of all this rural oratorio is without its intention, and thus we always satisfy ourselves; but when we run the matter up a little further, we find it a very small affair—two responses, one to each of two chords vibrating for ever and ever throughout all nature—pleasure and pain, pain and pleasure, turn by turn—the last pain being death!"

"How can you live here, Græme?" I said, as we stood under the old porch, looking out, or rather having our look blocked up by the thickness, and our ears deaved by the eternal screeching and cawing of five thousand crows overhead.

"There's gloom everywhere where man is," he replied, "and screeching owls in every brain. You

can't get quit." Then lowering his voice, "I am haunted! and yet live here in this Moated Grange. The difference is this: in the town the gaslight and eternal clatter distract a man like me who is plagued from within; here I find some concord between the inside and the out, only the owls in the inside are more grotesque and horrible."

"Well, Græme," said I, "it is needless to disguise what brought me here. The secret is out. The choke-damp has got wind. If the idiot had not blown his brains out, it would have been nothing. You could have paid him back, and he might now have had both his money and his brains."

"Got wind!" cried he, clutching me by the breast of the coat with the fury of a highwayman or a spasmodic actor. "Did the villain Ruggieri tell you?"

"No."

"So far well," he added, taking a long pull with his lungs, as if he had got quit of an attack of asthma; "but though I may satisfy the widow, how am I to appease Heaven? Come," he added, again seizing me with a force in which there was a tremble, "I want to disembroosom. You are my oldest friend, and a load divided is more easily carried."

And leading the way into the parlour, where the fire had got into a fine red heat, and was sending a glare through the ruby and golden contents of

several strangely-shaped bottles on the table, he threw himself on a chair on the one side, I taking one on the other. A few minutes of silence intervened.

"If it be as painful for you," he continued, "to hear a confession, as it is for me to make it, you may help yourself to bear the infliction by throwing down into your stomach some of that Burgundy. I will take none. I have fire enough in my brain already." And he pushed the bottle to me.

"You were a bit of a blackleg yourself," he continued, as he threw himself back in the arm-chair, and compressed his chest with his folded arms till the blood seemed to mount to his face. "You were present at that game where I took the five thousand by a trick from Gourlay. You know, as a gambler yourself, that all the tribe are by constitution cheats. It is folly to speak of an honest gambler. The passion is a ten thousand times distilled selfishness, with no qualm of obligation to God or religion to keep it in check—only a little fear of the bugbear, society. Our club at the 'Red Lion' all knew this in our souls; but every one of us knew also, that the moment he would be discovered cheating, he would be scorched with our hatred and contempt. He must leave our pure society on the instant—not, of course, that he was any worse than the rest of us, but only that he was unfortunate in being discovered. That night Gourlay and I were demons. We had baffled each other, and drank

till our brains seethed, though our countenances and speech betrayed nothing but the extreme of coolness. He had won a thousand of me, and hounded me from post to pillar, offering to be cleared out by my *skill*, as he called it, sneeringly. The fellow, in short, hated me, because the year before, at Baden-Baden, I had taken two thousand out of him, and would not give him his revenge."

"He must have thought you honest," said I; "otherwise he would not have thus badgered you to play."

"No; he had not the generosity to think me honest. I repeat, no gambler ever thinks another gambler honest, and he lies when he says so. He knew himself to be a rogue, and thought it diamond in the teeth of diamond." And pausing and meditating, he repeated the word, "Diamond—diamond—diamond."

I looked at him in surprise. He continued to keep up the cuckoo sound, trying to laugh, and yet totally unable to accomplish even a cackle, as if some internal force clutched the diaphragm, and mocked him, so that his efforts were reduced to a gurgling as in cynanche; like a dog choking with a rope round his craig, the sounds coming jerking out in barks, and dying away again in yelps and whines.

"You will know presently why that word produces these strange effects upon me," he at length contrived to be able to say. "Nor less the form of the figure as painted in these hell-books. It is

blazoned everywhere. The devil wears it in fiery lines on his face, as he hounds me a-nights through these thick woods. Yet I am not afraid of it—rather court it, as if I yearned for the burning pain of its red signature, in, and in, and in to my brain, as far ben as thought goes.”

“Have you got mad, Græme?” I ejaculated. “What has the figure of a diamond, or of ten diamonds”——

“*Ten*, you would say,” he immediately cried, as he started up, and immediately threw himself down; “*the ten*, if you dared. You are commissioned by the powers yonder—you, you, too, along with the others, including the devil.”

“I have no wish to be in the same commission with that great personage,” said I, with a very poor attempt to laugh, for I felt anxious about my friend. “I gave him up when I threw his books into the fire, and swore never more to touch the unhallowed thing.”

I perceived that my attempt at humour increased his excitement. “Repeat the words,” he cried; “say ‘The ten of diamonds’ right out, with open mouth, and repeat them a thousand times, so as to give me ear-proof that the powers yonder,” pointing to the roof, “are against me.”

At this moment the door of the parlour was opened by some timid hand.

“Come hither, my pretty Edith,” he said, in a calmer voice, as a little cherubby-looking thing,

with a head so like as if, after the fashion of Danæ's, it had been powdered by Jupiter with gold-dust, and a pair of blue eyes, as if the said god in making them had tried to emulate the wing of the Halcyon in a human orb, and intended, moreover, the light thereof to calm the storm in those of her father.

And so it did, to a certain extent; for Edith got upon his knee, and, putting her arms round his neck, kept peering with those eyes into the very pupils of her father's, till the light of innocence, softening the rigid nerve, enabled them to regain somewhat of their natural lustre.

"What did Trott, the crazy girl who spacs fortunes, give you, Edith?" and coruscations began again to mix with the softer light.

"A card," replied the girl, as she undid her embrace, and, casting her head to a side, viewed him timidly.

"She has been frightened," thought I, "by some consequences resulting from the same question put at some former time."

"And what was the name of the card?" he continued.

But the girl was now on her guard. She hesitated, and struggled to get away.

"Tell this gentleman, then."

"The ten of diamonds," cried she; and no sooner were the words out than she fled, like a beam of light chased by the shadow of a tombstone.

"You see how it is," continued Græme, getting



into his former expression ; “through this channel, this innocent medium, this creature the fruit of my loins, the idol of my heart, is the lightning of reproof hurled. A wandering idiot is prompted by the very inspiration of her imbecility to put into the hands of my child the emblem of my wickedness, that she in her love might place it before my eyes, there to develop the sin-print in the dark camera of my mind. No wonder she is alarmed at the mention of the words, for she read the horror produced in me when she held up what she called the pretty picture in my face. But, thank God! thank God!”——

And he fell for a moment into meditation.

“For what?” said I, as my wonder increased.

“That her mother, who is within a week of her confinement, knows nothing of this mystery.”

I was silent. I might have said, “What mystery?” but I would only have irritated him.

“Rymer!”

I started. I was looking into the fire, with my ear altogether his, yet the strange mention of my name startled me.

“What could Infamy—Infamy, with just a beam of consciousness to tell it was infamy, and no more but that beam—think and feel to be worshipped by Purity and Love? I have shrunk from the embrace of that woman with a recoil equal to that produced by the enfolding of a snake.”

“Though she knows not, and may never know, anything of this affair which has taken such a hold

of you?" said I, rather as a speaking automaton, forced to vocabulate.

"The very reason why I recoil and shudder."

I had made a mistake—I would not risk another. "The man has got into the enfolding arms of mania," I thought, "and I must be chary."

"Will you keep in your remembrance," he continued, "the words uttered by Edith, and how she came by them? Will you?"

"Yes."

"Then take another glass; you will need it, and another too."

I obeyed not quite so mechanically. The Burgundy was better than the conversation, and I made the pleasure of the tongue compensate for the pain of the ear.

He now drew out his watch, and, going to the window, withdrew the curtains. The shades of night had fallen. It looked black as Tartarus, contrasted with the light within.

"Come here!" he cried; and when I had somewhat reluctantly obeyed what I considered the request of one whose internal sense had got a jerk from some mad molecule out of its orbit in the brain, "Do you see anything?"

"Yes," said I—"a big black negative; but as for anything positive, you might as well look into a coal-pit and find what philosophers do in the wells of truth. There's nothing to be seen."

"No? Look there—there! See," pointing with

his finger, and clutching me tremulously, "once more—the traces as vivid as ever! See!"

I verily did think I saw something luminous, but it quickly disappeared. "Oh, probably the reflection of a lantern," I said.

"Yes, a magic one," he replied, sneeringly.

"I know of no more magical lantern than a man's head," I replied, a little disconcerted by his sneer. "Chemists say there's more phosphorus in the brain than anywhere else; and so I sometimes think."

He made no reply, but, seizing me by the coat, dragged me after him as he hurried out of the room, and, making for a back door, led me out, bareheaded as I was, into the wood. The darkness had waxed to pitchiness, and the noises were hushed. The crows had gone to roost; and had it not been for some too-hoos of the jolly owl, sounding his horn as he rejoiced that the hated sun had gone to annoy other owls in the west, the silence would have been complete. But, in truth, I hate silence as well as darkness, and have no more sympathy with the followers of Pythagoras, than I have with the triumph of the blind Roman who silenced the covey of pretty women, in the heat of their condolences for his blindness, by reminding them that they forgot he could feel in the dark. I thought more of the fire inside, and the bottle of Burgundy, on which I had made as yet only a small impression.

"If I want darkness, I can as well shut my eyes,"

said I, peevishly, "and I would even have the advantage of some phosphorescent touches of the fancy."

"Will you see that with your eyes shut?" he exclaimed, triumphantly, as he bent his body forward to an angle of forty-five, and pointed with his finger to an object clearly illumined, and exhibiting distinctly a large card, with ten red diamonds sharply traced upon it. The advantage he had got over me was lost in the rapture of his gaze; and he seemed to be charmed by the apparition, for he began to move slowly forward, still pointing his finger, and without apparently drawing a breath. Though a little taken by surprise for the instant, it was not easy for me to give up my practical wisdom, which, as a matter of course, pointed to a trick.

"You do see it, then?" said he.

"Surely," said I. "There is no mistake it is the figure of the ten of diamonds, probably stuck upon a turnip lantern."

"I did not ask you for a banter," he replied, angrily. "I can draw my own conclusions. All I wanted was to satisfy myself that I was free from a monomaniacal illusion. We cannot both be mad; besides, you're a sceptic, and the testimony of a sceptic's eyes is better than the sneer of his tongue."

Still he proceeded, I following, and the apparition retreating. "I told you to remember what Edith said," he continued, as he still pointed his

finger; "and I fancy you can never forget that before you. The two things are wide apart."


"And so are the two ends of a rope with which a man hangs himself," said I.

"It is gone!" cried my friend, without noticing my remark. "It has receded into that infinite from whence it was commissioned to earth to strike its lightning upon the eye of a falling, erring, miserable mortal."

"It is gone," said I, "and I am gone also—to finish my bottle of Burgundy, which I have as little doubt was commissioned from finitude to strike a little fire into the heart of another erring mortal, not at this moment perfectly happy."

And I made my way as quickly as possible into the parlour, glad to get quit of the chill of the night-air. Meanwhile, there appeared signs of some extraordinary movement in the other parts of the house, the nature of which Græme probably ascertained as he came along the lobby, for I heard bustling and earnest conversation; and presently little Edith came stepping in beside me, with something very mysterious in her blue eyes, far too mysterious for being confided to loud words, and so a whisper told me that her mother was taken ill, and that Dr Rodgers had been sent for. This little bit of information carried more to my mind than it brought away from Edith's. I knew before that Mrs Græme was on the eve of confinement, and it now appeared she had been taken in labour. I saw,

too, that my visit had not been very well timed, and the worse that Græme himself was in the extraordinary frame of mind in which I found him—unfit for facing the dangers, repaying the affections, performing the duties, and receiving the honours or enjoying the hopes of his situation. A rap at the door was the signal for Edith's departure, with the words on her tongue that she knew the Doctor's knock. I was now, I thought, to be left to myself; nor was I displeased, for I wanted a lounge and a meditation; though of the latter I could not see that I could make much, if any, more than confirming myself against all preternaturals as agents on earth, however certain their existence may be beyond the mystic veil that divides the two worlds. I had known Græme's crime and Gourlay's self-murder; but the crime was a trick among blacklegs, and the suicide was the madness of a gambler, who had risked his money and was ruined at the moment he wanted to ruin another. Surely Heaven had something else to do with its retributive lightnings, than employ them, in subversion of all natural laws, in a cause so inferior in turpitude to others that every hour pass into oblivion, with more of a mark of natural, and less or none of supernatural chastisement. I thought I might be contented with such a view of these prodigies as might quickly consign them to the limbo of men's machinations; yet somehow or other—perhaps the Burgundy bottle, if it could have spoken, like that of Asmodeus, might



have helped the solution—I got dreamy, and of course foolish, raising objections against my own conclusions, and instituting an *alter ego* to argue against myself for Græme's theory. It has always seemed strange to me, that, though mankind hate metaphysics, they are all natural metaphysicians, especially when a little *wined*. Perhaps the true reason may be, that, as wine came from the gods, it is endued with the power of raising us to its source. At least, our aspirations, from being *devine*, become wonderfully *divine*, so that supernatural agencies wax less difficult to our imaginations; and while we are ten times more ready to meet a ghost, we are as many times more ready to admit their possibility. But the end of these grand and elevated conditions is generally sleep and an ugly nightmare; and though my case was an exception as regards the latter, I awoke in not a very happy mood, just as Græme entered the room and told me it was twelve o'clock. As I rubbed my eyes, he sat down in his chair, and seemed inclined to court silence, but it was clear he could not achieve repose.

I felt no inclination to add to his apparent disturbance by any remarks on what I had seen; but it struck me as remarkable, that, while he got into contortions and general restlessness, putting his hand to his brow, throwing one leg over another, closing his hands, and heaving long sighs, he never so much as thought it worth his pains to ask my *opinion* of the scene in the wood. It seemed as if

he was so thoroughly convinced of a Divine manifestation against him, that he despised any exceptional scepticism as utterly beneath his notice or attention—thoroughly engrossed, as he appeared to be, with the terrible sanction of a portent of some coming retribution. His silence in some degree distressed me, as I thought he resented my levity in commenting upon his convictions; so it was with some relief that Dr Rodgers came in and sat down at the table, apparently to wait for a call to the bedroom. A man this of ostentatious gloom—too grave to deign to be witty, too sanctified to stoop to be cheerful, and therefore not the man I could have wished to see as the medical adviser, and perhaps the religious confidant, of my friend and his wife. A temperate man, too, by his own confession, pronounced over the top of a bottle, and he drank as if for health; while his manner of beslabbering the glass with his thick lips, indicated a contempt for its confined capacity: a tumbler would have suited them better: and he waxed apparently graver when the delightful aroma of the Bordeaux grape fondled his nostrils. We got into supernaturals immediately, though how the subject was introduced I cannot remember; but Dr Rodgers was a grave and heavy advocate for Divine manifestation, and Græme's ear, circumcised to delicacy, hung upon his thick lips. I asked for instances beyond the domain of the addled brains of old women, or the excited fancies of young; and



Græme looked at me intently, without saying a word.

“I have seen hundreds die,” said the Doctor, “ay, strong men, the tissues of whose brain were, in comparison of those of your old women and young enthusiasts, as iron wires to pellicles of flesh. And how do they die if they are Christians, as all men ought to be? What is there in death, think you, to subvert the known laws of physiology? We might suppose, that as the spirit is about to leave the mortal frame, it will be fitful, and flit from tissue to tissue, and gleam and die away, to flare up again in some worldly image, perhaps, of the past; as where I have known it shew the face of an early beloved one, long since gone, in all its first glory, to the eyes of a lover. Such are mere exceptions, from which no rule can be drawn; but they occur, and we admit them as consonant enough to natural causes. So far we all agree; but where is that consonance in all those numerous cases which have come under my own observation, where the man—a strong man even in death—is rapt into a vision set in a halo of light, and shewing forth, as an assurance of Divine favour, the very form and features of Him who died on the cross of Calvary? Is there anything in physiology to account for this? And then it occurs so often as almost to amount to a rule.”

“I have too much respect for religion,” replied I, “to throw a doubt on certain workings of the

spirit in that mysterious condition when it hovers between the two worlds, and when it can hardly be said to belong to earth; but the case is entirely different where the common agencies are all working through their fitted and natural means. We can never say that any of those means are superseded—only others are substituted, and we do not understand the substitution.”

“You are unfortunate,” said the Doctor, with a triumphant gravity. “If you admit that supernatural agencies ever have, in any stage of the world, in any place, way, or manner, or by any means, had to do with earthly things, or have to do in those days, or will have to do in any future time or place on the earth’s surface, your admission closes up your mouth for ever.”

“To do, in those days, on this night, not many hours ago!” cried Græme, with rolling eyes. “Who cares for admissions of those who see, when one’s own eyes are nearer the brain than are the eyes or lips of him who admits, or of him who denies?”

“Not hours ago!” said the Doctor, fixing his big eyes on the face of Græme; “and so near a birth?”

“Oh, she knows nothing,” said Græme.

“And I am supremely ignorant,” said I.

“Of what?” inquired Rodgers, turning his face again to Græme, as if he would take him into his mouth.

But just as he expected an answer a slight rap sounded from the door. Rodgers himself opened it, and found that the call was for him. Græme and I were left again together, but not to resume the former silence.

"I did not ask you," said he, "what you thought of the figure in the wood, for I expected nothing but a sceptical sneer. You have heard Rodgers. He is a shrewd fellow, belonging to a profession not remarkable for credulity."

"Answer me this," said I—"Did no one know the duplicate card you used in the cheat?"

"You were present and Ruggieri, no others—did you know it?"

"No."

"Then do you know that Ruggieri is dead in Italy? and even if he had more penetration than you, the secret died with him. But, I tell you, he could not have known. Nothing transpired at the play to shew that a duplicate card was used at all, far less to shew that it was a particular card."

"You may stagger me," said I, "but never can convince me that you are not having a nice game played off upon you, something similar to your own; only in place of duplicates, I fear there are triplicates. Why might not Gourlay have been aware of the fact you think only known to yourself?"

"And yet have shot himself as a ruined gambler?"

"Certainly it is more probable," said I, somewhat caught, "that he would have insisted upon your repaying him, under the threat of exposure. Yet one does not know what a man may do or not do, even if we knew the circumstances. Two doves will not pick up for their nests a straw each of the same shape. But, I believe, it is now settled, that no case of mystery has ever happened, or can be supposed by the most ingenious imagination, where the chances are more for supernatural agency than for human ingenuity or chance. The latter I put away out of your case, though the marvels of coincidence are stranger than fiction. Every one of us has a little record within his heart of such experiences. I have been startled by a coincidence into a five minutes' belief in supernatural agency. One opens a book of six hundred pages, and catches, on the instant, the passage for which he looked the whole day before. An actor dies in ranting 'there is another and a better world.' A soldier is saved from the punishment of death for sleeping on his post, by the fact of having been able to say that St Paul's on a certain night struck thirteen, which it never did before. Andrew Gordon, the miser, drew a prize of £20,000, for the number 2001, which he dreamed of the night previous he bought the ticket. A shepherd was the discoverer of the Australian diggings, by having taken up a piece of what he considered quartz to throw at

his dog called Goldy. Human history is full of such things; but, marvellous as they are, they are not more so than the ways by which man manufactures mysteries, and gets them believed as the work of Heaven. As to that illuminated figure I saw in the wood"—

My speech was interrupted by a strange sound from the other end of the house. Græme started to his feet. It was not one of pain coming from a sick-room, but rather one of surprise, and there seemed a bustle among the servants. The door opened, and a woman's face, with two wild staring eyes, looked in. "Come here, sir," she cried, and disappeared upon the instant.

"Something more," ejaculated Græme, as he hurried away. I was allowed no time for an absurd monologue. Græme was not absent many minutes, when he hurried in as he had hurried out, but his face was not that which he took with him, braced up into surprise and fear, as that was. He was now as pale as death's pale horse, and nearly as furious. His eyes beamed an unnatural light—his breathing was quick and snatchy, as if every inspiration and expiration pained the lungs. He seemed to wish some one to bind him with ropes, that he might escape the vibrations of his muscles, and be steadied to be able to speak.

"Be calm," said I, taking him by the shoulders; "what new discovery is this? Nothing wrong with Mrs Græme, I hope?"

"The child," he cried—but he could get no further.

"The child is"—

"Is what?" said I.

"Is marked on the back with the figure of the ten of diamonds."

"Pity it was not marked where it will wear its pockets," said I; "but it will assuredly be a very fortunate child, nevertheless, and shall bear a load of diamonds on his back like the Arabian Alcarsar."

"Are you mad?" he cried.

"Yes, with reason," I replied. "You know, nothing appears so outrageously insane to a madman, as that same God's gift called reason. They say, those who are bitten by the Tarantula, and get dancing mad, think the wondering crowd about them raving maniacs. And there was the weeping philanthropist in the asylum of Montrose, in Scotland, who wept all day, and could not be consoled, because of all the people outside the asylum being mad.

"But," he gasped, "the thing is there."

"No doubt on't," said I, "and you ought to be grateful. I have read somewhere of one John Zopyrus, who went mad when he heard of a son being born to him; and here you are not mad, though you have a son (I hope) born to you, with ten diamonds besides."

"But the thing is there," he again cried.

"Ay, there's the rub, my dear fellow; the rub is there—let the rub *be* there—that is, go and rub, and the thing rubbed will not be there after the rubbing."

"Madness, man! It is a true mother's mark."

"Verily, a real *nævus maternus*," said I, "impressed by an avenging angel on the mother's brain, and transferred by nature's daguerreotype to the back of the child."

"You have said it."

"Nay, it is you who have said it," I continued; "and I will even suppose it is a mother's mark, to please you for a little, though it has no more that character than this sword-prick in my left cheek. But taking it in your own way, I have a theory I could propound to you about these marks. We say that the soul is in the body. It is just as true that the body is in the soul. Every member of the entire physical person is represented in the brain, though we cannot discern the form in these white viscera. Now, see you, if a man loses his finger, his son will not be awanting in that member—but there are cases where the want of a member is hereditary. Why? Because the member was not represented in the cerebral microcosm of the first deficient person. From this small epitome in the brain, the child is an extended copy—*extended* from a mathematical point, where all the members and lineaments are *intended*. So, when the fancy of the mother is working in the brain—say, in

realising some external image—it will impress it in the cerebral person (woman) there epitomised; and if she is in a certain way, the image will go to a corresponding part of the foetal point, which is the epitome of the child. A most ingenious, and satisfactory, and simple theory, which will explain the ten of diamond-nævus, for”——

“Dreadful imbecility!” he exclaimed, as he threw himself on his chair; “most unaccountable and cruel trifling with a notable visitation of retributive justice, indicated by visible signs of terrible import to him who must bear the cross, and be reconciled to an angry Deity.”

“Against all that may tend to penitence for a past crime,” said I, getting grave, where gravity might avail for good, “I have nothing to say. But Heaven does not work through the mean of man’s deceit and stratagem, and the good that comes of fear goes with returning courage.”

Conscious of getting into a puling humour, I had no objection to an interruption by the entrance of Rodgers, who, having finished his work, was probably intent upon the gratification which generally follows.

“I wish you joy of the boy and the diamonds,” he said, as he seized Græme by the half-palsied hand. “The nurse is reconciled to the omen of a fortune—and surely never was omen more auspicious, for no sooner had the strange indication shewn its mute vaticination than it disappeared,



that there might be no deduction of beauty from the favourite of the gods." And drawing, with his lumbering hand, the tumbler near him, he filled it two-thirds up of pure wine, and presently his big lips grappled with it like a camel at the bucket in the desert, with such effect that the contents changed vessels in a twinkling.

"Disappeared!" said I, musingly.

"Yea, temperance hath her demands on occasions," said he, thinking I alluded to the exit of the wine, and not the ominous mark; "for there be two kinds of this noble virtue, the jejune and the hearty, whereof the former observes no plethoric gratifications, and the other is not averse to an extreme of cordial indulgence."

"Disappeared!" said I, in a harping way, once again, "and left the skin discoloured!"

"But it was there, and I saw it with these eyes," cried Græme, "and the Doctor saw it, and Betha—but, thank God, not the mother."

"The vouchsafing of the eyes is an easy task," drawled Rodgers. "The truth of present fact is of the moment of experience as regards the seer; but, as a moral entity, it never dies. The great Author of nature has His intention in these mysterious signs. We know only that there are two kinds of these God's finger touches—the enduring and the evanescent. That we have now witnessed was of the latter kind, which we also call superficial in opposition to the other, which is painted on

the *rete mucosum*, and never goes off. The difference of indications we know not, further than that a mysterious purpose is served by both. But might I ask if ever there was any occasion on which the figure of this card might, as connected with some thrilling incident, have been impressed upon the imagination of the mother?"

"Never," cried Græme, as he shook violently.

"Then it betokens fortune to the heir of the Moated Grange," said Rodgers.

"It betokens vengeance!" roared Græme, no longer able to contain himself; and he began to pace rapidly the room. Then stopping before me—

"How long will you torment me with your scepticism? Here, Betha," he cried to the woman, who at the instant again called Rodgers, "what did you see on the back of the boy?"

"The ten of diamonds, sir," replied she, evidently frightened by the wild eyes of her master. "But you are not to be feared; do I not know God's signs when I see them fresh from His very finger? I have seen them aforetime; and no man or woman on earth, no, even our minister, will convince me they are meant for nothing. This bairn will be a rich man, but it will not be by the devil's books; for He who made the mark does not tempt to evil by promises printed on the bodies of them He loves."

"I want not this drivelling," said her master, on

whom her reading of the sign had an effect the very opposite of that intended. "You're a fool, but you have eyes. Say, once for all, you saw it, and will swear. Take her words, Rymer."

"As clear as I see the mark on your cheek, sir," she said, addressing me. "It was not from one who loved you so well as your mother did when she bore you, you got that mark."

"I got it from a villain called Ruggieri," I replied—caring nothing for the start I produced in Græme, but keeping my eye on the face of Rodgers.

I will say nothing of what I observed on that long, sombre, saturnine index. It was an experiment on my part, and I might have found something, merely because I expected it; nor do I think Græme knew my object, though he felt the words as a surprise.

"And who is Ruggieri?" said the Doctor, by way of putting a simple question.

"*Perhaps* an Italian," said I. "Rodgers is, they say, the Scotch representative of that name."

"It is a lie, sir!" cried the grave son of Æsculap.; but finding he had committed a mistake, he beat up an apology close upon the heels of his insult. "I beg your pardon; I simply meant that the two names are different, and that you were out in your etymology."

"I am satisfied," I replied.

"And so am I," growled the Doctor, as he shuffled out, followed by Betha.

"What the devil do you mean?" said the Colonel, coming up, and looking me sternly in the face. "Is not this business serious enough for me and this house already, without the mention to that man, who knows nothing of me or of my history, of a name hateful to both you and me?"

"At present I have no intention of telling you what I meant by introducing that name in the presence of Rodgers."

"More mystery!" said he.

"No mystery—all as plain as little Edith's card she got from Trott, or the blazen in the wood, or the mark on the child's back. But I do not wish to dwell longer on a subject which gives you so much pain. I am to be off in the morning, and I should wish, before I go, to know what is to be the issue of all this wonderful working."

Græme had now seated himself; and I resumed my chair also, to wait an answer, which his manner seemed to indicate might be slow and delicate. We looked, in the dim light of the room, at two in the morning, like two wizards trying our skill in working out some scheme of diablerie; yet, in reality, how unlike! For though we had both been gamblers, and consequently bad men, we had for years renounced the wild ways of an ill-regulated youth, and settled down to tread,

with pleasure to ourselves, and profit to others, the decent paths of virtue.

“I am resolved,” said Græme, at length——

“On what?” I inquired.

“On making amends. That money, which by means of the substituted card I took from Gourlay, sticks like a bone-splint in the red throat of my penitence. I cannot pray myself, nor join Annabel, nor listen to Edith, when they send up their supplications to that place where mercy is, and where, too, vengeance is—vengeance which, in the very form of my pictured crime, dogs me everywhere, as you have seen, though a philosophical pride prevents you from giving faith to what you have seen—vengeance which, though using no earthly instruments, is yet the stronger, and more terrible to me, for that very circumstance that it brings up my conscience, and parades its pictured whisperings before my vision, scorching my brain, and making me mad—vengeance, breaking no bones, nor lacerating flesh, nor spilling blood, yet going to the heart of the human organism, among the fine tissues where begin the rudiments of being, and whence issue the springs of feeling, sympathy, hope, love, and justice, all of which it poisons, and turns into agonies. Yes, sir, vengeance which, claiming the assistance of the fairest virtues, conjugal love and angelic purity, makes them smite with shame, so that it were even a relief to me that the wife of my bosom were wicked, and the child

of my affections a creature of sin. What are these signs that haunt me but instigators to redemption? and can I hesitate when Heaven asks obedience?"

"A useless harangue," said I, "when you have the means of saving yourself. Pay the money, read your Bible, and the signs will cease."

"You have said it. I will pay the money; but I do not know where the woman Gourlay lives."

"That is not a difficult matter. Where money is to be paid, the recipient will start out of the bosom of the earth. I am about sick of this chamber of mysteries—though no mysteries to me; and I go to bed. I doubt if you may expect to see me at the breakfast-table in the morning."

"Will you leave me in this condition?" he said, with an imploring eye.

"You will hear from me. Good-night."

In the midst of all these supernaturals, I remained myself pretty natural—got naturally among the comfortable bed-clothes—fell naturally asleep—and, in consequence of late hours, slept naturally longer than I intended. I started at seven, got my bag, and, without seeing Græme, set out for C——town, got breakfast, and then took the stage for a seaport not very far distant. Having arrived at my destination, I sought out the Eastergate, a dirty street inhabited by poor people, mounted three pair of stairs till I saw through a slate-pane, knocked at a door, and was met by a woman, with an umbrageously bearded face peering out from

the side of her head-gear—that is, there was a head there in addition to her own.

“The devil!” said the man. “How did you find me out?”

“By the trail of evil,” I said, as I walked in, and shut the door behind me.

“Did you not know I was dead?” he continued, by way of desperate raillery.

“Yes, the devil was once reported to be dead and buried in a certain long town, but it was only a feint, whereby to catch the unwary Whigs. Let us have seats. I want a little quiet conversation with you both.”

We seemed rather a comfortable party round the fire.

“Ruggieri,” said I, “do you know that scar?”

“I have certainly seen it before,” replied he, with the utmost composure.

“Well, you know the attack you made upon me at Brussels, for the convenient purpose of getting buried along with your victim a certain little piece of dirty paper I have in my pocket, whereby you became bound to pay to me a thousand florins which I lent you, on the faith of one I took for a gentleman.”

“The scar, I deny,” he replied, unblushingly; “and as for the bit of paper, if you can find any one in these parts who can prove that the signature thereto was written by this hand belonging to this person now sitting before you, you will

accomplish something more wonderful than finding me out here." And he laughed in his old boisterous way.

"The more difficult, I daresay," replied I, as I fixed a pretty inquisitive gaze on him, "that you have a duplicate to your real name of Charles Rodgers."

"'Tis a d——d lie!" he exclaimed. "My father was—was—yes—an artist in Bologna—the cleverest magician in Italy."

"And that is the reason," said I, calmly, "that your brother, the Doctor, works his tricks so cleverly at the Moated Grange."

Detectives accomplish much by attacks of surprise—going home with a fact known to the criminal to be true, but supposed by him to be unknown to all the world besides. I had acted on this principle, and the effect was singular. His tongue, which had laid in a stock of nervous fluid for roaring like a steam-boiler a little opened, was palsied. He turned on me a blank look; then, directing his eye to the woman, "You infernal hag," he exclaimed, "all this comes from you!"

"I deny it," said the woman, as she left his side, and came round to mine. "But I now know, what I always suspected, that you are a villain. Sir," she continued, "this man, and his brother, Dr Rodgers, prevailed upon me to give them a paper, to enable them to get out of Colonel Græme the money he won from my husband. I



believe they have got it, and that they are keeping it from me."

"They have not got it," said I, "and never will. The money is yours, and will be paid to you, if to any."

"Thank God!" she exclaimed. "No good could come out of the designs of this man and his brother. They made it up to terrify the Colonel"—

A look from Rodgers stopped her; but the broken sentence was to me a volume. They sat and looked lightnings at each other; and I contented myself with thinking, that when a rotten tree splits, bears catch honey.

"Oh, I'm not to be frightened," she continued, as she gathered up courage to dare the villain. "I will tell all about the ten of diamonds which I heard made up between them."

"You most haggard of all haggard hags!" cried the man, as his fury rose, "do you know, that while I could have got you this money, I can cut you out of it? Was it the loss of the money, think ye, that made the wretched coward, your husband, shoot himself? No, it was conscience. They were a pair of villains. I know that Gourlay had a secreted card, whereby he was to blackleg Græme, and that it was disappointment, shame, and conscience, working all together, that made him draw the trigger to end a villanous life. But the game is up," he continued, as he rose and got hold of his *hat*; then standing erect and fearless, he held out

his finger, pointing to me—"Rymer!" he said, impressively, but with devilish calmness, "let your ears tingle as you think of me; it will keep you in remembrance of a friend, who, when next he meets you, will embrace you *cordially*—about the heart, you know. Good night!"

"And well gone," said the woman, as she heard the door slammed with a noise that shook the crazy tenement. "Oh! I am so happy you have come to relieve me of an engagement which I was ashamed of, and which would have yielded me nothing; for their object was to force money out of your friend, and then divide it between them."

"How did Rodgers or Ruggieri find you out?" inquired I.

"I cannot tell;—the nose of a blood-hound has a finer sense than a sheep-dog's."

"And how did you come to know of the compact between the brothers?"

"They got unwary under wine drunk at that fir table. The Doctor was the medical attendant of Colonel Græme, and this gave him means of working upon his conscience; and I know they have been at this work for a time."

"But how did Ruggieri come to know about the ten of diamonds?"

"Oh, the card was found crumpled up under the table by Ruggieri himself, who, with you, was present at the play. He has the card at this

moment. I have seen it. But this is the first time I ever heard of Gourlay's intention to cheat. I will never believe that; but then I am his widow, and may be too favourable to him, while Ruggieri was his enemy, and may be too vindictive."

"And how was the Colonel to be applied to, after his conscience was wrought up to pay?"

"The Doctor was to open the subject, and undertake to negotiate with me, to whom he was to hand over the money—one penny of which I never would have received."

"The matter is now in better hands," said I. "Will you be stanch and firm in detailing all you know of the scheme?"

"Yes, though I should not receive a farthing."

"And you will be willing to go to the Moated Grange, and, if necessary, swear to those things?"

"I will; and, sir, serious though the whole affair has been to me—for I am poor, and have children—I sometimes wondered, if I did not laugh, at the queer, far-brought, devilish designs of the Doctor. Oh, he is a very dragon that for cunning! I heard him say he would clap a painted piece of paper on the child's back, so as to leave a mark, and swear it was a mother's mark, graven by the hands of the Almighty. Oh, the blasphemy and wickedness of man!"

"Go, dress yourself," said I, "and come with me to the Grange."

"I will, if you can give me some minutes to get a neighbour to take charge of George and Anne." And away she went to get this family arrangement completed, while I sat panting with desire to free my friend from the agony of his condition.

It was about seven o'clock of that same evening that Mrs Gourlay and I reached the Moated Grange. I got her shewn into an anteroom, to wait the issue of my interview with Græme. It happened that the Doctor and he were together, and it even seemed as if they were converging towards a medium state of confidence."

"Dr Rodgers," said I, after the customary greetings, "it is well I have found you. I picked up a poor woman by the way who lay under the seizure of premature labour, and knowing the generosity of my friend, I brought her here for succour and relief. She is in the green parlour, and, I fear, in exigency—come."

"May I see her?" said Græme.

"Certainly, for a moment," said Rodgers. "Ah! I rejoice at these opportunities of employing the beneficence of our profession. Who knows but I may bring into the world one who will change the aspect of a hemisphere, and work out some great blessings to the human race!"

And following me, they arrived at the door of the green parlour. I opened it. Rodgers darted forward, Græme followed, and I stood in the midst of the three.

"Dr Rodgers—Mrs Gourlay, an intimate friend of your brother, Signor Ruggieri."

"Colonel Græme—Mrs Gourlay, the widow of that unfortunate man, Ebenezer Gourlay."

To which Mrs Gourlay responded by a courtesy, deep and respectful.

"I am master for the nonce. The door is locked, and Mrs Gourlay must be delivered of her child with the nævus of the ten of diamonds on its back."

And she was delivered, but not with the assistance of the Doctor. She performed her part well. Græme sat like a statue; and the Doctor held out like a Milo, with a stern defiance to the end of the exposure. We allowed him to get quit, upon the condition of silence on his part, for a prudent forbearance on ours. Mrs Gourlay remained at the Grange for some time, whereby we had an opportunity of further ascertaining all the details of the machination. A sum of money was given to her, and Græme's conscience was relieved, as well by this retribution, as by a conviction to which we both came, that the game between him and Gourlay was rendered at least equal, by the fact which we had both reason to believe as stated by Ruggieri, that Gourlay himself intended to cheat, and that his death could be more easily accounted for on that theory than on any other.

So far as peace could be brought to one truly penitent, that peace was brought; and many a time

since I have admired, in the happiness of the family at the Grange, that exemplification of the promise of our blessed faith, that there is no degree of guilt which may not be atoned for by the heart that is contrite, and trusts to the mercy of Heaven, through the eternally-ordained source.


## Sergeant Davies' Ghost.

---

THE story of Sergeant Davies' ghost, as I heard it in my youth, from the lips of Alister M'Gillas, a descendant of M'Pherson, is very different from what appears in the books of adjournal. We are not, indeed, to suppose that the high criminal court is to place great faith on the testimony of those, to many, soothfast witnesses, called apparitions,—but, otherwise, the records of a trial do not form the best details of a story—much, and often the most interesting parts, being excluded as irrelevant to the ends of Justice,—a shy personage, and not much given to romance. Sir Walter Scott was not so fastidious about ghosts: he did not think the world altogether complete without them, nor that the mind was healthy and sound that discarded all belief in them. But Mr Burton, coming after him in the wake of his observations on *our* ghost, thinks, on the other hand, that such belief is the very most palpable sign of craze; if, indeed, he does not consider, after the way of our Edinburgh minute philosophers—towhom, we hope, he has too much good sense to belong—that super-

naturals should be termed subnaturals, as being not so much a little above him, as a good way below him.

Some time in August 1750, Donald Farquharson in Glenshee, that wild Highland pass which joins the valleys of the Spey and Strathmore, was sitting in his shieling, smoking a pipe and enjoying the red heat of a peat fire. He had been out all day among the hills, and had brought home as many moorfowl as would keep him for a week. His gun, which had escaped Sergeant Davies and the Disarmament Act, was concealed in a hole cunningly cut right perpendicularly down through the mud floor;—a device followed, it has been said, by many of the Highlanders at that time; and putting us in mind, as we now mention it, of the anecdote told of a certain Finlay M'Allister at Dubrach, who carried his ingenuity so far as to have his three-footed stool over the hole, and the gun consequently beneath him, and was so ill requited for his sagacity, that one night—by what means never could be ascertained, probably by one foot of the stool pressing down the earth—the gun went off when Finlay was seated, and blew him three feet from the ground. That the story was not altogether an invention of some ill-natured Sassenach might appear from the fact that Donald had departed from the common stratagem, and had his musket stuck into a deep hole close by the wall of his shieling. Nor did he want his skean dhu, “the bit thing,” as they called





the deadly instrument, so congenial to the habits of the Highlander, that he never thought himself right if he did not have it, not only about him, but so conveniently placed for his hand that he might fondle the haft even in his moods of absence.

"And they would tak the 'bit things' frae us," he said to himself, "as if we men o' the hills had naething to do with our hands but put them, like the Lowlanders, into gloves or pocket-holes, till they became white and lady-like, fit only for wielding a toothpick. The deil hang them on the rape o' his tail, if they tak them from me."

Now, the hour when Donald was indulging in these thoughts was approaching to ten—a very late one in the Spital—and Donald was meditating whether he should do a bird on the gridiron to his supper, or be content with brose, when his meditations were disturbed by a stealthy knock at the door.

"Wha is there at this hour?" he cried, as he threw the birds into a corner, and covered them with his plaid. "Donald Farquharson is in his bed sleeping, and neither man nor woman, nor devil nor ghost will be safe in disturbing him this night."

"It's me, Donald," said a voice, which he knew to be that of Allan M'Nab.

"What brings you here at this hour, man?" he said, as he opened the door. "I took ye for ane o' thae musket-stealing dogs, wha grudge a man a

shot or a stab, as if a buck or a patrick were women-hearted creatures in red coats and breeks."

"You're to gae down this minute to Sandy M'Pherson's faither's shieling. He wants to speak to ye; for Sergeant Davies is haunting him, and winna gie him peace."

"Hoot, man; Davies is in his grave a year syne come September."

"Ay, but it's true; and you're the man he wants to see."

"True!" ejaculated Donald, thoughtfully, and, as it would seem, changed in a moment from the rough son of the hills to a grave diviner of mysteries—for we are to keep in mind that, to a Highlander, a ghost is as real a personage as if he drank a quaiigh with one every night, and talked for an hour with it on things in general, and at same time as awful as such beings are to certain circles round an embery fire at Hallowe'en. "I will go," he resumed, as he put on his bonnet, and stuck "the bit thing" between his hose and his brawny leg.

And leaving the hut, the door of which he took care to lock, in case any of the disarmers should think of looking in, he went so far with Allan, then struck off among the tall, dark pines to the right, by a path leading to the shieling occupied by Sandy's father. As he approached the shieling, he saw a small glimmer of a light coming from the end window, from which he augured that his friend was in his bed. A Highland girl opened the door.

"You're just the man," she said, shaking her head; "but I thought ye were the Sergeant come back again."

"The Sergeant again," thought Donald, as he followed the girl into a boxed-off place, in the form of a hallan, where, by the light of a small cruse, he saw Sandy lying on a heather bed on the floor, with two or three blankets over him. His face, which was partly covered with irregular clots of black hair falling from the dense shock on his head, pale and anxious—his eye nervous and restless, as if he feared the entrance of some awe-inspiring visitor—a woe-worn, wretched-looking being, flung down, as it were, upon the earth, by some giant calamity, rather than reduced there by some bodily ailment.

"It's you, Donald," he said, in a low, tremulous voice.

"Ay; but what's the matter, man? You, the strong Alister, the first o' climbers, the champion at the wrestle, and the king at the kabers-feigh, what lie ye there for, as if ye had seen yesterday the seim o' your ain funeral?"

"I have seen waur," was the reply; "tak that low stool, man, and sit on't, and haud your head down as far as you can, so that my words may hae nae farther to gang than necessary to get to your lug, for my breath is weak, and my words may carry a wonder to your spirit."

Donald took the stool and sat down, and bent

to the speaker. Their two heads were within a foot of each other; and M'Pherson, in place of commencing his communication within the expected time, kept, for the space of three or four minutes, staring into the very cores of Donald's eyes, as if, in Highland inspiration, he had been under the charm of the "taisch."

"What *do* you mean, Sandy?"

But Sandy would not speak yet, nor for two minutes more.

"Speak, man!"

"Just last Wednesday night, about the hour o' twelve," commenced Sandy, "when the cruse was low, but my een as deft as they are now, the wraith o' Sergeant Davies stood there, whaur you now sit, and said to me, in our ain mither tongue"——

"Gaelic?" responded Donald.

"Gaelic, and the best of Gaelic. 'I was murdered,' said he, 'on the Hill of Christie, and my bones still lie there, the head severed from the body, and all scattered and so unlike the way in which a Christian's bones should be disposed, that I have come to you to ask you to go to the Hill of Christie, where you will see my bones lying as I have described them; then you will forthwith proceed to dig a hole, wherein you will put them, so that a Christian may lie, in this Christian land, as Christians ought to lie.'

"'No,' I replied, 'I have nae heart in me to

bury your banes ; you were a disarmer, and I am, besides, terrified, and canna do it.'

" 'Send for Donald Farquharson,' said the ghost; 'he is a brave man, and will go with you.' "

Now, Donald Farquharson, whose head had still been bent towards Sandy's haggard face, drew it back a little, and looked doubtfully, for the reason that, though he believed thoroughly in apparitions, he did not think that Sergeant Davies had come in the proper ghost-like way.

"Do you doubt the truth o' what I say?" continued Sandy. "If you do, I will rise from this bed this moment, and take you to the Hill o' Christie, and shew you the banes."

"I am ready to gang" replied Donald, "because you may be right ; and if the ghost mentioned my name, it might be angry at my refusal, and come and haunt me too."

"There is little doubt," said Sandy, as he rose, with apparent difficulty, and dressed himself.

"Now, we will need a lantern," said he, as he wrapped his plaid about him, "and a spade. There's nae moon, I think."

And straightway he got what he looked for, and having lighted a tiny wick, which threw out a sorry glimmer, he went to the door, followed by Donald, and they proceeded on their way. The Hill of Christie was at the distance of about a mile and a-half—a space soon travelled by Highlanders. It would be approaching eleven when they arrived.

Not a living soul was seen, nor light of window, nor star—only the glimmer of the lantern, as it dodged in Sandy's hand, and threw its unsteady streak up on the hillside.

"They are near the hollow o' the auld peat castings," said Sandy, as he moved the lantern about. "This way."

"See," he continued, as he made the lantern glance right and left, "there they are—here is the skull, here a thigh shank, and yonder an arm. They are a' scattered about higgledy-piggledy."

"And what is this?" said Donald. "Actually a piece o' the Sergeant's blue coat with a bane in the inside. How could the banes hae been scattered in this way?"

"The eagles, or maybe whitthroats and fumarts," replied Sandy. "They've had glorious feasting. But every dog has his ain day. You remember how the Sergeant used to boast o' his shooting eagles, and how he killed twa in ae day in the Hill o' Galcharn yonder? Wha kens but it was the very eagles' young birds that picked his banes sae clean!"

"Hush!" replied Donald, "or I'll never fire a shot at an eagle again in my life."

"We will now set to wark," said Sandy, as he placed the lantern upon the ground, and took the spade from the hands of Donald.

"I will dig," he continued "and you will collect the banes. We daurna leave a single finger-

joint, or the ghost will be back on me again; for I didna tell you this was the second time he cam to me."

"And why did you no tell me that afore?" inquired Donald?

"To be surely, because I was in a hurry to describe the meeting whaur your name was mentioned, for every moment I was feared he would be in upon me; but now, when we are at the wark, my conscience is easier. There's just ae thing I hae some doubts about,"—and Sandy began to meditate.

"And what is it?" asked Donald.

"Why, the Sergeant said naething, so far as I remember, about his blue coat and breeks, and I am at a loss to ken whether to bury them or no. He was proud o' his regimentals, and maybe would like that we should send them to his widow."

"Safer to put them a' in thegither," said Donald; "we canna be sae nice—there's locks o' his wig lying here, and ye might as well say we shouldna bury that too."

"Very true," replied Sandy, as he began to dig with great earnestness; while Donald, taking the lantern, and bending down, with his head within a foot of the earth, began picking up the bones, and piling them up by the side of the intended grave. While engaged in this work, Donald, who had heard that the Sergeant had a silver watch on him, and several valuable rings, besides fifteen

golden guineas, was busy examining every spot, in the expectation of finding some of these articles, and, strange enough, he came to the bone of a finger, encircled still by a ring with a shining jewel in it.

"Here," he cried, "is ane o' the Sergeant's rings. Did he speak o' them?"

"The deil ae word," was the answer. "I was na sae sure about the coat and breeks; but I'm quite sure he said naething about the buryin' o' the chewellery."

"Maybe he meant things o' that kind to gae for trouble," added Donald.

"A wise consideration, Donald, and the mair likely that we werena his murderers. But I've something to say about that when we're dune. We'll just keep the ring, and tak our chance o' anither visit."

Again resuming his work, he very soon made a hole large enough for containing the bones, and these having been shovelled in, and the earth thrown over them, and well beaten down, that grave was finished, which is so well-known to the people of the Spital, and is pointed out to travellers up to this time.

"This has brought the sweat to my brow," said he, as he sat down. "Come here, Donald, and sit by me, for I'm no dune wi' a' the ghost said."

And Donald having complied—

"When the Sergeant tauld me to bury his banes, and I had agreed. he made for the door."



"He didna vanish?"

"No, he was discreet, and didna want to fear me; yet feared I was, but no sae muckle as to mak me forget to get out o' him wha it was that killed him; sae I put the question, which didna seem a'thegither to please him, and I put it again, and, he at length said, in maist sorrowfu' tones, 'Duncan Clerk and Alexander M'Donald.'"

At the mention of these names Donald lay back on the hillside, and uttered that peculiar Highland sound of admiration, resembling a protracted "whew," as if he had made a discovery.

"I see now," he said, "how Duncan Clerk took Allan M'Nab's lass frae him—wi' goold rings and trinkets."

"And how M'Donald bought a score o' sheep on the back o't," added Sandy; "but its gruesome and eery here man, nor am I a'thegither sure but we may hae anither visit o' the Sergeant, about his ring."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when Donald, who at the time was looking at him, in the light of the lamp, saw him hold his hand over his eyes, as if to keep the glimmer out of them, while his gaze was directed down the hill. His attitude was at first fixed and stiff, then he began to shake, and drops of perspiration started out, as if upon the instant, on his forehead.

"See you onything, Donald? Haud the lantern back, man. Look down yonder; what's yon?"

and do you no see it moving up and up the hill-side, as if it were coming to us?"

The first thought that suggested itself to Donald was instantly to start up, but wherefore Sandy could not divine, till he saw his neighbour go to the grave, and, scraping a small hole, lay the ring therein.

"Now," said he, "we maun bide the warst;" and he sat down again close to his neighbour, who was again gazing on a dark figure surely enough pacing up the hillside.

And up and up it came, nearer and nearer, making no sign, uttering no word, but quietly taking the long hill-step so peculiar to the lithe-limbed Gael. In a few minutes more it stood before the two gravediggers, who were speechless.

"What, in the name o' a' that's guid in heaven or earth, are ye doing here at this hour?"

"Duncan Terig!" cried Sandy, using the Gaelic for Clerk.

"Duncan Terig!" responded his companion.

"Why no?" asked Duncan.

"Because ane might hae thought," said Sandy, "that the very name o' the Hill o' Christie might hae terrified you, let alane stalking on it at the hour o' midnight."

"What mean ye?" said Clerk, sternly; "what right hae ye to speak in that sort to me?"

"Because it is you wha hae brought us here this night," said Sandy.

"To do what?"

"To bury the banes o' Sergeant Davies."

"And what right hae you to bury the banes o' that man, who was hated frae Glenshee to Dubrach?"

"The right o' Heaven," replied Sandy. "Sergeant Davies came to me, and commanded me to bury his banes."

"And what mair did he tell you?" continued Duncan, as his voice got harsher and more unnatural; "what mair?"

"That it was you and Sandy M'Donald wha slew him."

The words seemed to strike palsy into the heart of Clerk—as sturdy a believer in ghosts as other Highlanders—and for a moment he could not command a word in reply; at length his natural fierceness prevailed.

"The ghost lies!" he roared, so loud that Gulcharn echoed back the words, so as to suggest to a superstitious mind the notion that they had been repeated by some supernatural power.

"Lies!" he repeated.

And "Lies!" again resounded from the same source.

"The ghost is mocking him even now," said Donald; who, nor his friend, had ever before heard so distinct a reverberation, and both were actually under the belief of what they fancied.

Even Duncan seemed to be under the same awe, for he suddenly became calm.

"And do you mean to tell what the ghost said to you?" he asked.

"I'm no forbidden," replied Sandy.

"I forbid you," cried Duncan; "and, by the banes o' my mither"—

"Fearfu' aith!" muttered Donald.

"Ay," continued the agitated man, "by her white skull that held the brains that knew her son wad never hang on a tree, I warn you—I warn you," he repeated, holding up his finger as he retreated step by step, "warn you—warn you, that another ghost may some night come to the Spital and tell your father the same tale."

And the words died away as he again walked deliberately down the hill.

"Deil ban him, but he weel deserves to hang on a tree!" said Sandy, as he drew from his spleuchan a leather flask, which he thought, when he came away, his fear might be the lesser for on the hill.

"Ye'll be the better o' that, Donald," he said, handing it to him. "And ye may now tak up the ring again."

"Ay," rejoined Donald, rising and going to the grave, where he scraped up the ring, and put it into his pocket; "and now, here's peace to the ghost of Sergeant Davies," he said, as a toast which he by no means dishonoured by the quantity of whisky he drew from the flask.

The companions now began to move home-

wards. The hour was late ; but there is no hour in which there are not some who are up to watch the moments, as the tick of the clock falls on the ear of the dying, or that of the lover or the bride ; and so it soon got over Glenshee that there had been a light seen on the Hill of Christie on the previous night ; and even—wherein Sandy M'Pherson might have been suspected of imprudence—that he and Donald Farquharson had been burying the bones of Sergeant Davies, the circumstances of whose disappearance and suspected murder were familiar to the whole of that part of the country, and not less to the Lowlands, and even the most southern districts of England. Then there was sufficient mystery in these circumstances to impart to the affair an air of romance. The character of Davies, an English sergeant sent down to disarm the Highlanders, was such as to impress strongly a simple and rude people. He was, in his rank, a military exquisite of his time. He wore gold rings ; one—though a married man—from a lover, with the posy,

“ When this you see,  
Remember me ; ”

had large silver buckles to his shoes, knee-buckles, twenty-four silver buttons, with silver lace and buttons to his hat. Then he had always gold about him—not less than fifteen guineas and a half, in a green silk purse, on that day when he was seen for the last time ; and, to crown all, he

was a jolly sportsman, fond of his bottle and a song. He had gone from Dubrach to meet a party at Glenshee, in September of the year before; and, although every search was made for him, the first trace afforded was by the communication of his alleged ghost to Sandy M'Pherson. The real truth is, that Sandy had told his vision to John Growar and Shaw of Daldownie, and such an occurrence in the Highlands was calculated to stir the hamlets to their hearths.

The morning next but one after that evening, Allan M'Nab was in M'Pherson's shieling before Sandy was out of bed. He looked serious and anxious, as if he had some important information to communicate.

"Do ye ken," he said, "that it's through a' the Spital that the fiscal is to be wi' ye this day?"

"Let him come," replied M'Pherson.

"What will you say to him?"

"Tell him God's truth, to be sure. Think ye I would tell him a lee?"

"But he'll no believe your ghost, as you describe the vision."

"He may believe, or no believe," said Sandy, proudly; "I'll tell him what I saw."

"But how, how will you describe the apparition?"

"Just as I saw it," returned the other, with Highland pertinacity. "The first time he was amaisht naked, but the last time he had on his blue coat and breeks."

---

"There," said Allan, "you winna be believed. How could the ghost hae on claes that, as you say, were lying at the time on the Hill o' Christie?"

"Oigh, oigh, man! how could he come ava?" and Sandy laughed. "Whether think ye it mair easy for a man to come out o' the ither warld, or, after he has come, to put on a pair o' breeks?"

"The first, surely," replied Allan. But he had another question to put, and he seemed to hesitate—"About the murderers—what will you"—

"I'll just say what the ghost said, 'That Duncan Clerk and Sandy M'Donald were the murderers.' I dinna fear the face o' clay—ay, though it were pipe-clay. But what is a' this for? What hae you to do wi't, excepting, maybe, that M'Donald took your leman frae ye, by bribing her wi' the sergeant's silver buttons? Awa, never ye think that M'Gillas stands in need o' a M'Nab, wha is o' nae clan, to help him to speak to a fiscal. I aye thought," he added, drawing himself up to his full stature of six feet, "that a' the warld kenned by this time o' day that every Mac but a M'Nab is, and can be, naething but a Highland gentleman."

"I never doubted that," said Allan, sneeringly, as he departed, and straightway directed his steps to the shieling of Donald Farquharson.

"You're to be examined, Donald," he said, as he seated himself alongside of the cautious Highlander, at the time busy with his breakfast.

"And wha is to examine me?"

"Nae less than the county fiscal, or maybe the shirra himsel'."

"And wha cares?" replied Donald; "*I* didna kill the Sergeant, though I helped to bury him."

"There's naebody saying it," rejoined Allan. "The ghost has settled a' that. Sandy has admitted that the spirit tauld him it was Duncan Clerk and Sandy M'Donald."

"Did Sandy M'Pherson tell you that?" inquired Donald, looking askance at him.

"Ay, and what's mair, he tauld it to you; and you maun tell the fiscal the hail truth, Donald, or they'll hae ye up to Edinburgh yoursel', and clap you in the heart o' Mid-Lothian, and maybe hang you."

"They'll no better try that string," replied Donald, not altogether at his ease. "But it's impossible, man, in the very face o' my evidence, that Sandy M'Pherson tauld me that the ghost asked him to send for me to help him to bury him."

"And you'll say that to the fiscal?"

"To be sure I will."

M'Nab, being seemingly satisfied with an interview, the apparent intention of which was to do a friendly act towards Donald, as he had already done towards M'Pherson, left him to finish his breakfast. However he had come to his information about the intentions of the fiscal, it was very



soon proved to be true, for scarcely had he got to the main road of the Spital, than a horseman stopped, and dismounted, and Allan went straight-way up to him, as if to hold the horse. An earnest conversation instantly ensued, which ended in Allan leading the horse away to a stable, and the fiscal, for such he was, made for the house of M'Pherson. He stayed there for more than an hour, and afterwards went to Farquharson's, and also to the house of John Growar, and to some others, whereby he nearly consumed so much of the day, that it was approaching the evening when he left Glenshee.

Next morning the news went through the Spital that Duncan Clerk or Terig, and Alexander M'Donald, had been apprehended during the night for murdering Sergeant Davies, and lodged in Perth prison. Associated as this apprehension was with the story of the ghost, and the burying of the bones, the wonder was equal to the excitement; and not only the people in the Spital, but hundreds from the distant towns, came, day after day, to examine the lonely grave on the Hill of Christie. There were formed, presently, two parties, the believers and non-believers, of whom the former greatly exceeded the latter, and seemed, too, to have the advantage over their opponents, in the fact, which at the time seemed to be true, that the authorities must be held to be believers, insomuch as they had no other

evidence upon which to rely for a conviction than that of the ghost itself, got at second-hand; for even the believers had no hope that the sergeant himself would appear with his laced-hat, blue coat, and breeches, in the witness-box.

But, whatever evidence the authorities had to rely on, it soon appeared they had sufficient confidence to place upon it. At the next circuit the trial came on. In the meantime the grave had been opened, the bones, with the pieces of blue cloth, put into a box, carried away, and laid upon the table of the court, as the real *corpus delicti*. Among the principal witnesses examined were Sandy M'Pherson and Donald Farquharson, who both stuck *mordicus* to the ghost, nor was all the learning of the counsel M'Intosh retained for the culprits able to shake Sandy out of his belief, or the statement of it. Nor is it unimportant for us to say, as evidencing a feature of that time, that, during the examination, the eyes of the audience were very wide and round, and their mouths very open, and of the same shape; and that those organs in the judges were so far different, that the eyes were oblique, and their lips much more than ordinarily curled—a state of matters which, as regarded the spectators and listeners, was unfortunately modified when Sandy, in reply to the counsel, declared that the ghost spoke good Gaelic, and the counsel broke in with “Very good, for an English sergeant!” But we


are to be comforted now by Sir Walter Scott's observation on this part of Sandy's evidence, that there was really no logical weight in the counsel's sneer, for that if the ghost could appear at all, it could speak Erse—an observation not, however, as we have seen, new, insomuch as Sandy, in his reply to Allan M'Nab, had been equally subtle, in the discovery that if the Sergeant could come from the other world, he could surely put on a pair of breeches. Then, how Sandy would have been confirmed if it had been known at that time that the devil, according to Porson, appears in under-garments of the same colour.

At this stage of the case, and when the court, auditors and judges, were suspended between wonder and scepticism, an extraordinary and unexpected turn took place in the evidence. A man was placed there in the witness-box, not known to the people of Glenshee. He was as wild-looking a Highlander as had yet been examined, with large, bushy beard and eyebrows, that, like those of a Skye dog, hung down, so as actually to make it necessary for him to look through hair. He was clad in the Cameron tartan, could not articulate a word of English; and the shrill tones of his Scottish-Irish attacked the ear as strong onions do the nostrils. His name was Angus Cameron. He was from the wild distant country of Rannoch, and the wonder was how he should know anything of this deed done near Glenshee. Did the

ghost visit him too? or had he the far-famed gift of the children of the mist? None of them.

"I was on the Hill of Gulcharn," he said, "on the 28th of September last. It was about an hour and a half before sunset. I saw upon the top, or near the top, of a hill right opposite, but the name of it I do not know, a man in a blue coat, with a gun in his hand, and on his head a hat with a white edging. I saw other two men—that one," pointing to Duncan Clerk, "being one of them—going up the hill towards the man in the blue coat. They met with him, and, after they had stood for some time together, I saw Duncan Clerk strike at the man in blue, and I heard the man cry out, and saw him place his hand upon his breast, and run. Then the two men ran after him, and one of them shot a gun, and the other shot a gun, and the man in blue fell dead."

So the proof finished, and the jury found the two panels not guilty; but there was no clearing up of the question of the reality of the ghost. The believers clung to their opinion, and said that the evidence of the Rannoch man was in their favour, as it agreed perfectly with the evidence given by M'Pherson. On the other hand, the sceptics maintained that the entire ghost story could be easily accounted for. They founded on a statement made by M'Pherson, that he had first, and before the ghost visited him, discovered the bones upon the hill. Others, besides, had seen them,



and the finders had made up their minds to give their testimony, so that the murderers should be brought to justice. For such an unneighbourly and unclannish action, they behoved to have some rational excuse. Love of justice, a respect for the laws, would, no doubt, be received with scorn, as a paltry subterfuge—the desire of vengeance, though rational, would not look so well. The summons of a restless ghost would afford something like a motive to a Highlander, and would be consecrated by the sanction of Heaven; and so, they said, this plan was adopted for the justification of an informer, as well as for his safety, at a time when the feelings of the clans were still strong, and vengeance still slumbered in their breasts as a virtue.

If it was Sandy M'Pherson's intention in concocting, as thus alleged, the story of the ghost, he did not attain his object, for the friends of Duncan Terig, who left the country and was drowned, conceived a deadly feud against him, in which they were joined by Agnes Clerk, the widow. Allan M'Nab, who had been her first love, still continued his affection, and though he was, ostensibly, the friend of M'Pherson, he saw the opportunity that was presented to him of pushing his suit under the cover of hatred to his friend. The time that had elapsed since Terig's (Clerk's) death was decent, as the custom goes, and Allan sought the shieling of the still beautiful Agnes.

"You will be astonished to see me here," said he, as he looked at her with all the emotion of a long-cherished love.

"Awa, awa, man," she replied; "my love for Terig put out that I aince felt for you, and it can never be lighted up again."

"I dinna want it," said Allan; "but can the enemy of M'Gillas be a stranger in this house, whaur your husband lived, and whaur frae he was driven by a villain?"

"Ay," she said, "now you speak sensibly, Allan; but I thought you were the friend o' M'Pherson."

"Ye are wrang, Agnes. Sandy M'Pherson now blames me, because, he says, I tauld the fiscal the story o' the ghost; and sae I did, but I didna tell him that the ghost blamed Duncan Terig. I only said that it tauld him to bury the banes; and whaur was the wrang in that? But, I say, he had better let me alane; I hae him in my power."

"Your power!" cried the woman, as she frantically took hold of him. "Allan M'Nab, I aince loved you—and then hated you, because Terig said you hounded on the men o' the law to hang him; but aince assure me that you hate M'Gillas, and you can nae langer be a stranger in this house. But as for the auld love, na, na! it canna be. Tell me, man, how hae ye M'Pherson in the keeping o' your power?"

"Do you no ken," said he, "that M'Pherson has lied against your husband in the High Court,

by trumping up a story, that a ghost tauld him that Duncan Terig murdered Sergeant Davies? Now, I can prove that he perjured his soul, and thereby get him hanged as high on a gallows as he wanted to hang your husband."

"And will you?" she replied, eagerly. "Say you will; and, by the love you aince shewed me, and which I returned, but never can light up again, I will gie you what will mak your een rin round. I have gowd and bits o' silver I got frae Terig, and it will a' be yours, if ye hang M'Gillas."

"And will I no? But I winna hae your gowd, —no that M'Pherson says it was Sergeant Davies', but because it is yours. Na, Agnes, I want to see you happy—and gowd, they say, is the devil's means, under Heaven, to mak us blithe."

"But, maybe, ye'll no do a' this? I just fear it's oure guid to be true."

"By the saul o' our chief, who sleeps in the island o' Loch Tay, I will. Did he no say to me, that every Mac but a M'Nab was a gentleman?"

"And, nae doubt, Terig a dog to be hanged on the Hill o' Christie! Come here," she added.

And, taking the cruse from the wall, she led him to the further end of the shieling, and drawing out a drawer, in an old oak cabinet which Clerk had brought from Perth to her, she took from it a silver watch, which Allan knew could be no other than the sergeant's, for such an article was then most uncommon in the Highlands.

"See you that!" she said, as she looked like one who had revealed a great treasure.

"It will be yours when M'Gillas is hanged," she added, with something like a laugh, though, so wild, it might have been mistaken by a Lowlander for a scream.

"I dinna want it," said Allan; "keep it—it will be a tocher to your next man."

"Never!" she cried. "Never man will come in the place o' Duncan Terig."

"Except Sandy M'Pherson," said Allan, with a leer, not so well timed as he thought.

"Just sae," she replied, with a frown; "just sae! if you mean that place where Duncan now lies—the grave—the grave!"

"Weel, I maybe did mean that—dinna look sae wild, woman!"

"Wild! Do you no mind that day when you met me and Duncan, as he took me to the kirk, wi' a silk plaid oure my head, and rings on my fingers, and you flew away wi' a look I will never forget—sae wild, that Duncan whispered to me, 'See, Agnes, Allan's mad!' I was lost to you, sae is Duncan lost to me: but he is dead, and I am living, though never to be yours."

She then replaced the watch, saying, "Lie there till ye're needed. You have promised, Allan."

"Ay," replied he; and, bidding her good-night, left her, not in the best of spirits. He had gone in the hope of something better than a bribe to



hang his friend, for he had no hatred against Sandy, though he could scarcely forgive him the gibe against the great M'Nabs.

"I will see what my mither says to the ways o' her kind," he said.

And in a few minutes he was beside the old crone, a character more belonging to the Highland race than the Saxon—perhaps deriving its peculiarities from their comparative isolation, which, leaving nature to her uninterrupted progress of shrivelling up, and casting the shadows of the other world over a life nearly unrelieved by pleasant and changing avocations, imparts the eldritch aspect they often present.

"I've been to Agnes Terig," he said. "She will never marry anither man; and, unless I fa' upon some way to change her, I hae nae chance o' her being my wife."

"Never marry another man!" cried the woman, as she was bending her head over the peat fire in the middle of the shieling; and then she began to laugh in the way of these crones—a most peculiar sound, as one could fancy coming from the devil when trying to be merry over the follies and weakness of mankind.

"Heard ye ever a woman wha didna speak in that daft way, Allan? Read them a' backwards, Allan lad; the mair she mourns, the mair she burns. Haud till her, man; I've seen a mair silly auld love drive out a new; and a dead love has nae

chance against a living ane. Forby, think ye she doesna ken that Terig murdered the Sergeant? How did I ken that day I saw her kirked, whaur was Terig to get the braws?"

"And yet if I thought that, I wadna hae her," said Allan.

"It's a lee, man; and ye're only a simple coof. She kent it only after she was married; and if there's ony thing weel-favoured aboot us, it is just that we love through thick and thin. Whaur is the heart o' a Highland woman that would gie up its love, merely because her Gilderoy gave anither a stab wi' a bit skean dhu? Yea, man, she'll think mair o' him; and if he's hunted by the Saxon loons, she'll stick to him the closer. Gae 'wa, 'wa!—ye might hae said sae if she had turned against the puir deevil."

"True, true, mither."

"But it's no that, man. She has gowd!" and she took another laugh of the same indescribable kind.

"I've seen it," said Allan.

"You've seen it! and speak o' no taking a woman wi' gowd! Ye're nae bairn o' mine."

"But what am I to do? I've tauld ye she says she winna hae *me*."

"Play cantrips, as ye did afore," replied the woman, as she looked at her son, and leered, and laughed again.

Allan was thinking of her probable meaning, and sat silent, looking at the blazing peats.

"Think ye, man," she continued, as she put her face close to his ear—"think ye now, Allan, if Terig's ghost were to come afore Agnes, and tell her that he wasna at rest in his grave, for that he took her frae Allan M'Nab, she wadna change her sang? Deil hain her love; you wad hae mair o't maybe than ye wanted."

"Very true, mither," responded Allan; "I ken your drift."

"*My* drift—your *ain*, man, and weel drifted afore, when ye tried to get the law to tak awa a man for murder, wha took awa your lass for love."

"Whisht! There's Sandy M'Pherson by the window, wi' his een fixed in his head, and taking twa yards at ae step. What's wrang?"

And as Sandy came in and sat down, they both looked at him inquiringly, if not suspiciously.

"John Growar says that Daldownie is angry, and threatening to get me taen up afore thae Lords for leein'. Deil tak the hail wheen o' them for leears themselfs, for to be sure they're breeked women."

"And why should ony Mac but a M'Nab fear to stand up afore breeked women?" said Allan.

"Wha says that o' the M'Nabs?" cried the woman, angrily; "I'm a M'Nab mysel—I married a M'Nab, and hae born M'Nabs. Are they no the first o' the clans? hae they no royal blude in them? Didna Finlay M'Nab"—

"Weel, let that stand, Margaret," said Sandy. "I just wanted to tak your advice, for ye're kent for skill frae the Spey to the Tay."

Margaret M'Nab sat for a time silent, with her eyes, like those of very mysterious persons, again fixed on the fire; then, without changing her position, and rather like as if she were addressing that same fire than Sandy M'Pherson, she said in a slower and more impressive manner than that of her prior conversation—

“Sandy M'Gillas, I hae a charm that will save ye, but it can only be hung on the rape that binds you to the gallows tree.”

“Heaven hae mercy!” cried Sandy; “surely they canna hang a man for leein’!”

“Down yonder, man, they’ll hang him for speaking the truth. A man has only to say a gun or a claymore’s his ain, and he’s awa to the prison o’ Perth.”

“Are you mad, mither? What charm?” said Allan, timidly.

“Never ye mind, Allan,” replied she; “you never hear the wind but when it has something to fecht against; and what’s my breath but wind? Haud awa hame, Sandy, and keep your mind frae a’ fear. Even Sergeant Davies wad think it nae great trouble to take a stap up and save you frae being hanged—let alane my charm.”

And Sandy went away, leaving the son and mother to join their heads again over the fire, and nod them, and shake them, and perhaps laugh.

Not losing the connexion of the links of this chain of Highland diplomacy and mystery, we are next to know that the statement made by John

Growar to Sandy M'Pherson had got to the ears of Agnes Clerk, and pleased her desire of vengeance so well, that she would go a mile along the road to Dubrach to see John himself, and, if possible, instigate him to take means through Dal-downie to effect the punishment of M'Pherson. It was one of those delightful Highland nights, when the wind is hushed, so that the tall pines stand erect without having a leaf shaken, -and we can hear the patter of the hoof of a stray doe as she touches gently the sward of the hills. Then, to give charm to this quiet mood of nature in her own secluded retirement, the moon shone down so mildly and lovingly, that it might appear a libel on supernal powers, to hint that any plotting of man's machinations was going on under her mild eye. It was late when Agnes took the road; but then, Vengeance is not of early hours, or of any particular hour, if it be not that she is strongest in her purposes when the world is stillest, as if she fed herself by brooding over her wrongs when others sleep. Neither was Agnes appeased or checked by the beauties of the scene which poets have raved about—not without cause for their raving; for Vengeance has no sense of the beautiful, unless we say there's beauty in her hatred of what is so unlike herself—loving blood and strife, and haggard lineaments, and whatever is distorted and convulsed by passion. So on she went, looking neither to the right nor to the left, far less upwards, where there

was a shining reproof of her unchristian mission. Arrived at her destination, she found the man she wanted.

"Is it true, John Growar," she said, "that Shaw o' Daldownie, wha was nae friend o' Terig's, has threatened to punish M'Gillas, for trying, by lees, to hang my husband?"

"True enough, Agnes," answered Growar, recovering his surprise at the late visit. "But I am not certain that Alexander M'Pherson told a lie in the court. I have told Mr Shaw that I was strongly impressed with the suspicion that M'Pherson really thought that the visit paid to him was by Sergeant Davies' ghost; and that I further thought, and I tell you I do now think, and more than that, I have reason to think, that some one in Glenshee personated the ghost for an end or purpose not easily known. You yourself, perhaps, are the very fittest person to ascertain who, of all the people in the Spital, was most likely from motives of revenge against Duncan Clerk to have done so extravagant a thing."

"I ken nae enemies Terig had but Allan M'Nab, and the witch, his mither," replied Agnes, thoughtfully. "Allan was my sweetheart before Terig; and now I mind weel the look the auld limmer gave me that day I gaed to the kirk."

"I knew nothing of that," said Growar, "nor will I meddle with names: but I think poor Sandy, at least, innocent; and I should not be sorry to see

the mysterious affair cleared up. It has been the speech of the whole kingdom, and has brought disgrace upon this hitherto quiet place, as well for its having been the scene of so cruel an act, as for the imputation of superstition cast upon the Highlanders. But I doubt if the clearing up of the mystery would do you any good."

"Isna revenge a guid thing?" said the stern woman.

"A very useless thing often, and as often a very bad thing, especially when, as is too commonly the case, there is no just cause for it, and no justification in the innocence of the incensed party."

"But I say Terig was innocent," cried she.

"I hope so, but many have a very different opinion. At all events, he has been punished; and if his fate was unmerited, Heaven will be his reward and your protection."

Altogether unconvinced as well as unappeased, Agnes Clerk left the house to which she had hurried in hope, and began retracing her steps to her lonely dwelling in Glenshee. She revolved the words of Growar often and often, still returning to the suspicion his observation had excited against Allan M'Nab. Many recollections rose up at the bidding of this one thought, all tending to confirm it, and as the confirmation grew stronger and stronger, the desire of revenge she had felt against M'Gillas was transferred to M'Nab, who she saw, according to this theory, had been bent

first on sacrificing her husband, and now was willing to sacrifice the man who was the mean of his devilish stratagem. As the feeling rose, she clenched her hand, and staggered like one in drink, while she quickened her pace under the excitement of the fiery thought. So engrossed was she, that though, like the rest of her race, she was prone to superstitious beliefs, she felt no fear on the solitary road, trending sinuously as it did between the woods of tall pines, and every now and then retreating into darkness, rendered more gloomy by the contrast of the bright, moon-illuminated places. She met no one; indeed, the hour was so late that all the inhabitants in the Spital were a-bed and asleep; and, in these parts, scarcely a stranger traveller would pass for hours together, even in the day-time. Under other circumstances, there can be no doubt that she would have been in the expectation every minute of encountering as plausible-looking a ghost as that of the Sergeant.

She had got to within a quarter of a mile of the Spital, and was at a part of the road where the trees were more than ordinarily thick, and where too there was a sudden turn, rendered necessary by the intervention of a huge rock which rose up twenty feet on one side. Ghosts are particular about the places where they deign to shew themselves; and there is no doubt that their taste is for umbrageous passes, where the moonlight is not too strong for their susceptible eyes, nor yet



sufficient to expose them too much to the vulgar gaze even of those mortals they come to visit, to be seen by, and to talk to in their peculiar way. Suddenly a figure started from the side opposite the rock, and stood in the presence of Agnes. Were we to describe it very carefully, we would begin with a negative, by saying, that it really had no white sheet about it, neither had it horns, nor hoofs, nor claws, nor any of those strange appurtenances generally belonging to the class. It was the figure of a man, and just as like Duncan Terig as the ghost of any man could be like that man himself, when in the real bodily body.

It stood for a minute or two without uttering a word. Agnes was rivetted, eyeing keenly and suspiciously its form and action, and waiting for the expected salutation, for that it intended to speak was indicated by its holding forth its right arm. At length it condescended to speak.

"Agnes Clerk," it said, in very hollow tones, "I lie on the wild shores o' an island in the sea, and there's nae peace for me there. I am miserable; and what think you maks me sâe, that I cannot rest in my grave, but must flit owre hundreds of miles even to come here, whaur I left you in grief? It is because I took you faithlessly frae Allan M'Nab. Now, Agnes, the only thing that will give peace to my bones is, that you consent to marry Allan. He will make a good husband to you, and you will need somebody to protect you against

evil men in an evil world. Now mind, Agnes, marry Allan, or I will haunt you every night, and gie you nae rest, even as I hae nae rest mysel."

"The deevil's in you for a fause loon, but you're Allan M'Nab himsel!" cried Agnes, rushing forward and seizing him by the hair; "and what's mair, ye were the ghost o' Sergeant Davies!"

## The Chance Question.

---

I HAVE made allusion in some of these stories to the question of coincidences, which troubles the minds of tough thinkers more, perhaps, than they will be inclined to allow. It does not require very strong brain-tissue to jerk off the belief in dreams; and as for ghosts, from the days of Hibbert to those of Boismond, we have been reducing their consistency, till now, in spite of the wise conclave at one of our universities, which meets occasionally for the purpose of debating the for and the against, we are almost forced to resign the mysterious and sometimes gentle and useful creatures altogether. But we find a difference in respect to coincidences. It may be true, as regards mere concurring events in the physical world, that, as corresponding laws are always working throughout all nature, we may expect, what we find, a concurrence of similar effects; nor is there much room for the indulgence of the feeling of mystery in such cases; but when we come to mind and spirit, and find some strange relation between our thoughts, expectations, or hopes, and some physical event, we naturally think

that some superior power is busy working out our fate in spite of ourselves. How often does this thought occur to every one of us. We are relieved from an exigency—lifted into safety at the very moment when we are in the darkest slough of despair; and, again, there is a clustering of evils which we refer to our demerits, whether we will or no. We are all diviners in this way—the exception of positivism being a mere protest against the existence of what man simply cannot well comprehend; and though I could, like others, speculate with the same dubious amount of interest either way, I choose rather to give an account of one of the most extraordinary concurrences I have ever met.

It is not long since the cleverest of these strangely-constituted men called Detectives went up to his Superintendent with a very rueful face, and told him that all his energies were vain in discovering a clue to an extensive robbery of plate which had occurred in — Street some short time before.

“I confess myself fairly baffled,” he said; and could say no more.

“With that singular foxhound organ of yours?” replied his superior. “The herring must have been well smoked.”

“At the devil’s own fire of pitch and brimstone,” said the detective. “But the worst is, I have had no trail to be taken off. I never was so disconcerted before. Generally, some object to point direction, if

even only a dead crow or smothered sheep; but here, not even that."

"No trace of P—— or any of the English gang?"

"None; all beyond the bounds, or up chimneys, or down in cellars, or covered up in coal-bunkers. I am beginning to think the job to be of home manufacture."

"Generally a clumsy affair; and, therefore, very easy for a man of your parts. What reason have you?"

"Absolutely none."

"That is, I fancy," said the Superintendent, "the thousand pounds of good silver, watches and rings, are absolutely gone."

"You know my conditions," said the officer; "give me the thing stolen, and I will find to a living certainty the man who stole it; or give me the man who stole it, and I will find you to a dead certainty the thing stolen. But it's a deuced unfortunate thing that a man can't get even a sniff."

"Yes, especially when, as in your case, all his soul is in his nose."

"And with such a reward!" continued the chagrined officer; "scarcely anything so liberal has been offered in my time; but, after all, the reward is nothing—it is the honour of the force and one's character. It is well up for the night anyhow, and I rather think altogether, unless some flash come by telegraph."

"You have no other place you can go to now?"

said the Superintendent, musingly, and not altogether satisfied.

"None," replied the officer, resolutely. "I have been out of bed for ten nights—every den scoured, and every 'soup-kitchen'\* smelt, every swell watched and dogged, and every trull searched—I can do no more. It is now eleven, my eyes will hardly hold open, and I request to be allowed to go and rest for the present."

"As you like;" replied the Superintendent. "We are neither omniscient nor omnipotent."

"The people who get robbed think us both," said the officer; and taking his hat, left the office, and began to trudge slowly down the street. The orderly people had mostly retired to their homes. The midnight ghouls from the deep wynd were beginning to form their gossiping clusters; the perambulators had begun their courses; and fast youths from the precincts of the college or the new town, were resuming their search for sprees, or determined to make them. There were among them many clients of our officer, whom he knew, and had hopes of at some future day; but now he surveyed them with the eye of one whose occupation for the time was gone. His sadness was of the colour of Jacques', but there was a difference—the one wove out of his melancholy golden verses in the forest of Arden—our hero could not draw out of his even silver plate in the dens of Edinburgh. He had come to the

\* Places for smelting plate.

Tron, and hesitated whether, after all, he should renounce his hunt for the night—true to the peculiarity of this species of men, whose game are wretched and wicked beings, always less or more between them and the wind's eye, and therefore always stimulating to pursuit; but again he resolved upon home, or, rather, his heavy eyes and worn-out spirits resolved him, in spite of himself, and he turned south, in which direction his residence was. So on he trudged till he came about the middle part of the street called the South Bridge, when he heard, pattering behind him, the feet of a woman. She came up to him, and passed him, or rather was in the act of passing him, when, from something no better than a desire to simulate activity, or rather to free himself from the conviction that he was utterly and entirely defeated, he turned round to the girl, whom he saw in an instant was a street-walker, and threw carelessly a question at her.

"Where are you going?"

"Home," was the reply.

"Where do you live?"

"In Simon Square."

Here he was at first inclined to make a stop, having put the questions more as common routine than with any defined intention; but just as the girl came opposite to a lamp-post, and was on the eve of outstripping him, he said,

"Oh, by the by, do you know any one thereabouts, or anywhere else, who mends rings?"

"Yes."

"Who is it?"

"Abram."

"What more?"

"I don't know his other name; we just call him Abram, and sometimes Jew Abram."

"Did you ever get anything mended by him?"

"No; but I bought a ring from him once."

"And what did you do with it?"

"I have it on my finger," she replied.

"Will you let me see it?" he continued.

"Oh yes."

And as they came forward to another lamp-post, he was shewn the ring. He examined it carefully, taking from his waistcoat another, and comparing the two—"Won't do."

"How long is it since you made this purchase?"

"About ten days ago."

"And what did you pay for it?"

"Three and sixpence."

By this time they had got opposite the square where the girl lived. She crossed, and he followed, in the meantime asking her name.

"There is Abram's house," she said; "there's light in the window."

And the officer, standing a little to see where she went, now began to examine the outside of Abram's premises. A chink in the shutters shewed him a part of the person of some one inside, whom he conjectured to be Abram sitting at his work. He



opened the door, and it was as he thought. An old man was sitting at a bench, with a pair of nippers in his hand, peering into some small object.

"Can you mend that?" said the officer abruptly, and, without a word of prelocution, pressing into his hands a ring.

"Anything," was the prompt reply.

But no sooner had the ring come under the glance of his far-ben eye—

"Yes—ah! ye-es—well—no—no."

And the peering eye came, as it were, forward out of its recess, and scanned the face of the officer, who, on the other hand, was busy watching every turn of the Jew's features.

"No; I cannot mend that."

"Why? You said you could mend anything."

"Ye-es, anything; but not that."

"No matter—no harm 'in asking," replied the officer, as he looked round the apartment, and fixed his eye on the back wall, where, in utter opposition to all convenience, let alone taste, and even to the exclusion of required space, there were battered two or three coarse engravings.

"Good night!"

"Goo-ood night!"

"Now what, in the name of decoration, are these prints splarged over that wall for?" asked the officer of himself, without making any question of the import of the Jew's look, and his yes and no. He was now standing in the middle of the

square, and, turning round, he saw the light put out. Another thought struck him, but whatever it was, it was the cause of a laugh that took hold of him, even in the grasp of his anxiety; yea, he laughed, for a detective, greatly more heartily than could be authorised by anything I have recorded.

"Why, the lower print is absolutely the old Jewish subject of the cup in the sack," he muttered, and laughed again. "Was ever detective so favoured?—a representation of concealed treasure on the very wall where that treasure is! Were the brethren fools enough to put the representation of a cup on Benjamin's sack?"

"Robertson!" he called to one of his men, whom, by the light at the street-end of the entry, he saw passing, "send two men here upon the instant."

"Yes, sir."

And then he began to examine more thoroughly the premises, to ascertain whether there were any exit-openings besides the door and window. There were none. He had a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes to wait, and five of these had not passed before he observed some one go up and tap at Abram's door. A question, though he did not hear it, must have been put by the Jew, for an answer, in a low voice, responded,

"Slabberdash!"

"The crack name of that fellow Clinch, whom I've been after for a week," said the officer to himself, as he kept in the shade of a jut-out.

The Jew had again answered, for the visitor repeated to himself, as if in fear and surprise, "Red-light," and, looking cautiously about him, made off.

"It is not my cue to follow," muttered the detective; "but I will do next best."

And hurrying out of the mouth of the entry at the heels of the visitor, he caught the policeman on the Nicolson Street beat almost on the instant.

"Track that fellow," he said; "there—there, you see him—'tis Slabberdash; do not leave him or the front of his den till sunrise. I'll get a man for your beat."

"Yes, sir," replied the policeman, adroitly blowing out his bull's-eye and making off at a canter.

The officer returned to his post, and within the time, the two assistants arrived.

"Go you, Reid, to the office, and send a man to supply Nicolson Street beat till Ogilvy return; he's on commission; come back instantly."

The man obeyed with alacrity.

"And now, Jones, you and your neighbour take charge of that door—keep seeing it without it seeing you; you understand? Keep watch; and if any one approach, scan him for Slabberdash, but take care he doesn't see you. I will relieve you at shutters-down in the morning; meanwhile, I'm at home for report or exigency."

"I comprehend," replied the man, "and will be careful."

The officer took for home, weary and drowsy,

though a little awakened by the events of one half hour. There was sight of game, as well as scent. The Jew's look by itself was not much, yet greatly more to the eye of a detective than even a pretty expert physiognomist could imagine. The picture-plastered wall was more; the cup in the sack was merely an enlivening joke; but Slabberdash was no joke, as many a douce burgher in Edinburgh knew to his cost. The fellow was a match for the father of cheats and lies himself; and, therefore, it could be no dishonour to our clever detective that hitherto he had had no chance with him, any more than if he had been James Maccoul, or the great Mahoun.

Meanwhile, the other watch having arrived, the two kept up their surveillance; nor would they be without something to report to their officer, were it nothing more than that little Abram, for he was very diminutive, about one in the morning rather surprised one of the guard, who was incautiously too near the house, by slowly opening the door, and looking out with an inquiring eye, in his shirt; and, upon getting a glimpse of the dark figure of the policeman, saying, as if to himself, though intended for the said dark figure, whoever it might be, "I vash vondering if it vash moonlight."

And, shutting the door hurriedly, he disappeared. About an hour afterwards, a tall female figure, coming up the entry from North Richmond Street, made a full stop, at about three yards from Abram's

door, and then darted off, but not before one of the guard had seen enough, as he thought, to enable him to swear that it was Slabberdash's trull, a woman known by the slang name of Four-toed Mary, once one of the most dashing and beautiful of the street-sirens. About an hour after that, the two guards forgathered to compare notes.

"The devil is surely in that little man," said the one who had heard the soliloquy about the moon; "for, whether or not he wanted light outside or in to drive away the shadows of his conscience, he served his purpose a few minutes since by lighting his lamp. I saw the light through the chinks, and venturing to listen, heard noises as of working. He is labouring at something, if not sweating."

"Perhaps *melting*," said the other, with a laugh. "But here comes our officer; there is never rest for that man when there's a bird on the moor or a fox in the covert."

The truth was, as the man said, the detective had gone home to sleep, but no sooner had he lain down than the little traces he had discovered began to excite his imagination, and that faculty, so suggestive in his class, getting inflamed, developed so many images in the camera of his mind, that he soon found sleep an impossibility, and he was now there to know whether anything further had transpired. The men made their report, and he soon saw there was something more than ordinary in Abram's curiosity about the moon, and still more in the

coincidence of the visits of Slabberdash and Four-toes. He had a theory, too, about the working, though it did not admit the melting. He knew better what to augur. But he had a fault to find, and he was not slow to find it.

"Why didn't one of you track Four-toes? One of you could have served here. She has been off the scene for three weeks, and is hiding. You ought to have known that a woman is a good subject for a detective. Her strength is her weakness, and her weakness our opportunity. But there's no help for it now. We must trace the links we have. If she come again, be more on the alert, and follow up the track. Keep your guard, and let not a mouse-tirl escape you."

"The light is out again," remarked one of the men; "he has gone to bed."

"But not to sleep, I warrant," said his superior. "Look sharp and listen quick, and I will be with you when I promised."

He now proceeded to the office in the High Street, where he found the Superintendent waiting for a report in another case. He recounted all he had seen and heard.

"You have a chance here," said the latter, "and to confirm our hopes, I can tell you that Four-toes' mother gave yesterday to a shebeen-master in Toddrick's Close, one of the rings for a mutchkin of whisky; and, what is more, Clinch has been traced to the old woman's house, in Blackfriars' Wynd."

I suspect that the picture's true after all. The cup is verily in Benjamin's sack."

Thus fortified, our detective sought his way again down the High Street; and, as he had time to kill between that and the opening of the shutters in Simon Square, he paid a visit to Blackfriars' Wynd, where he found his faithful myrmidon keeping watch over the old mother's house, like a Skye terrier at the mouth of a rat-hole. He here learned that Mary with the deficient toe had also been seen to go upstairs to her mother's garret, which circumstance accorded perfectly with the statement of the guard in the Square, as no doubt she had returned home after being startled at the door of Abram. But then she was seen to go out again, about an hour before, though whither she went the watch could not say. The hour of appointment was now approaching. The day had broken amidst watery clouds, driven about by a fitful, gusty wind, and every now and then sending plouts of rain, sufficient to have cooled the enthusiasm of any one but a hunter after the doers of evil. He had been drenched two or three times, and now he felt that a glass of brandy was necessary as an auxiliary to internal resistance against external aggression. He was soon supplied, and, wending his way to the old rendezvous, he found his guard, but without any addition to their report of midnight. Abram was long a-getting up, and it seemed that he was first roused by the clink of a milkwoman's tankard on

the window-shutter. The door was slowly opened, but in place of the vender of milk handing in to her solitary customer the small half-pint, she went in herself, pails, and tankard, and all. Our detective marked the circumstance as being unusual, and, more than unusual still, the door was partly closed upon her as she entered. Then he began to think that she had nothing about her of the appearance of that class of young women.

"Has not that woman the appearance of Four-toes?" said the officer.

"I'm detected if she's not the very woman I saw in the dark," said one of the men.

"Split," said the lieutenant; "but be within sign."

The precaution was wise. In a few minutes Abram's face was peering out at the door, not this time looking for the moon, more probably for the enemies of her satellites; and what immediately succeeded shewed that he had got a glimpse of the men, for by and by the milkmaid came forth and proceeded along the square.

"Go and look into her pails," said the lieutenant to Reid, as he hastened up to him. "Jones and I will remain for a moment here."

Reid set off, and disappeared in the narrow passage leading to West Richmond Street; but he remained only a short time.

"Crumbie is yeld! there's not a drop of milk in her pitchers," said he, on his return; "and its no other than Four-toes."



"Ah, we've been seen by Abram," said the officer; "and the pitchers are sent away empty, which otherwise would have contained something more valuable than milk. After her again, and track her. Jones and I will pay Abram a morning visit."

The man again set off; and the officer and Jones having hung about a few minutes till Abram came out to open the shutters and afford them light inside, they caught their opportunity, and, just as the Jew was taking down the shattered boards, they darted into the house. Abram was at their heels in a moment.

"Vat ish it, gentlemen?"

"A robbery of plate has been committed," said the officer at once; "and I am here, with your permission no doubt, to search this house."

"Very goo-ood; there ish nothing but what ish my property."

The officer had even already seen a half of the bench—which had consisted of two parts put together, probably originally intended for some other purpose than mending jewellery—had been removed and placed against the wall where Joseph and his brethren were standing round the cup in the sack, so that it was more difficult to reach the wall, though the device was clearly only the half of an idea, as the prints still stood above the bench, and might, by a sharp eye, have still suggested the suspicion that they were intended for something

else than decoration, or even the gratification of a Jew's love for the legends of his country. But the officer did not go first to the suspected part. He took a hammer from his pocket, and began rapping all round the wall. "Stone, stone—lath, lath; ah, a compact house."

"Very goo-ood. Vash only three weeks a tenant."

The officer recollected the estimate of the time given by the street-walker, the *fons et origo* of all, and his hammer went more briskly, till he came to the patriarchs. "Good head that of Joseph," he said, with a laugh; "hollow, eh?"

"Vash a good head—not hollow; the best at the court of Pharaoh."

In an instant, a long chisel was through the picture; and in another, the poker, driven into the chisel-hole, and wrenched to a side, sent a thin covering of fir lath into a dozen of splinters. The hand did the rest. A cupboard was exposed to the eyes of the apparently wondering Israelite, containing, closely packed, an array of plate, watches, rings, and bijouterie, sufficient to make any eye besides a Jew's leap for the wish of possession.

Abram held up his hands in affected wonderment, as the lieutenant stood gazing at the treasure, and almost himself entranced. Jones was fixed to the ground, at one time looking at the costly treasure, at another at his superior, who had already, in this department of his art, acquired an envied reputation.

"Very goo-ood!" exclaimed Abram; "vash only here three weeks. What fools to leave here all this wonderful treasure!"

"Abram, will you be so good as take a walk up the High Street? Jones will shew you the way. Breakfast will be waiting you. And do you," looking to Jones, "send down a box large enough to hold this silver, and two of our men to remove it to the office."

"Vash the other tenant," cried Abram, as he saw the plight he had got into—"vash not me, so help me the God of my forefathers, even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were just men, as I am a just man; it vash not me. Vash not the cup put in Benjamin's sack?"

The officer laughed—at this time inside, for it behoved him now to be grave—at the recollection of the strange coincidence of the picture and the stolen plate.

"Come," said Jones, "let us start;" and, clapping the Jew's old boshed hat on the head of the little man, he took him under the arm to lead him out.

"After depositing him," whispered the officer into Jones' ear, "get help; proceed to Blackfriars, where Ogilvy is on the watch, and lay hold of Clinch. Some others will start in search of Reid, who may have tracked Four-toes, and seize her. You comprehend?"

"Perfectly. Come, Abram,—unless you would like to walk at a safe distance?"

"Surely I would," replied Abram; "and so would every man who vash as innocent as the child vash born yesterday, or this minute."

When the prisoner had departed, the officer sat down on the Jew's stool to rest himself, previous to making a survey of the articles, with reference to an inventory he had in his pocket. In this attitude, he took up a pair of Abram's nippers to fasten a link in his watch-chain, which threatened to give way, so that he might very well have represented the master of the establishment sitting at his work. This observation is here made as explanatory of another circumstance which presently occurred in this altogether remarkable case. The door, which Jones had closed after him, was opened stealthily; an old woman, wrapped up in a duffle cloak, slipped quietly and timidly in, and going round the end of the bench, whispered into the ear of the lieutenant—

"You 'll be Abram, nae doubt?"

"Ay," replied he.

"Ye 're early at wark?"

"Ay."

"Weel, the milk-woman—ye ken wha I mean?"

"Oh yes; Four-toes."

"Ha! ha! ay, just Four-toes, that's Mary Burt; ah! she *was* a buxom lass in my kennin'. Weel, she has sent me to you, in a quiet way, ye ken, to tell ye that the p'lice have an e'e on you. That ill-lookin' scoondrel, the cleverest o' the

'tectives, as they ca' them—I never saw him mysel, but dootless you'll ken him—has been seen in the coort here, wi' twa o' his beagles, and you're to tak tent."

"Yes, I know the ill-looking Christian dog. Vat ish your name?"

"Chirsty Anderson."

"Where do you live, Christian?"

"In Wardrop's Coort, at the tap o' the lang stair. And the milk-maid—ha! ha!—says you're to shift the things to my room i' the dark'nin', whaur Geordie, my laddie, will hae a plank lifted, and you can stow them awa, ayont the ken o' the cleverest o' them."

"And where ish the milk-woman?"

"In my room, pitchers an' a'."

"Well, tell her to keep there, as vash a prisoner, till I come to her place."

"I will."

"Isn't Geordie, my good woman, called Squint?"

"Just the same," she replied, with a laugh; "and, ye ken, he has a right to a silver jug or twa, for he risked his neck for 't as weel as Clinch."

"Surely, surely."

"But you're to gie me a ring to tak to her, for she's hard up, and I'll try Mr E——e wi' 't, at night, and get some shillings on 't."

"Certainly, Christian—not a good name that—but here," taking her by the shoulders, and turning sharply in the direction of the door, for he was

afraid she might notice the wreck made in the recess, "look out there at the door, and be on the good watch for the ill-looking dog."

"Ah, Abram, ye're sae clever! The deil's in them if they put saut on *your* tail."

"Here, give that to Four-toes, and tell her to keep good prisoner till I come."

"Just sae—a bonny ring!"

"Quick! turn to your right, and go by the Pleasance, along St Mary's Wynd, up the High Street, to your home."

"Ay," replied the woman, as she departed.

Not five minutes elapsed, when Jones and the two assistants with the box arrived; when the officer cried—

"Jones, follow up an old woman, in a gray duffle cloak, Christian Anderson by name, who is, this moment, gone down by the Pleasance, to take St Mary's Wynd and the High Street on her way to her room, in Wardrop's Court, at the top of the stair. Having seen her landed, stop five minutes at the door, to give her time to deliver a ring to Four-toes, then step in, and take the young woman to the office. You will find Geordie Anderson there also, the notorious Squint—so pick up a man, as you go, and make Squint sure."

"On the instant," replied the man, and was off.

By and by, and just as our officer was beginning to compare the plate with the inventory, the Superintendent, who had got intelligence of the

discovery, came hurrying in. They found, to their astonishment, that every article was there, excepting two rings—the one probably that offered to the shebeen-man by Four-toes' mother, and the other that which had been presently sent to Four-toes herself. A more complete recovery was, perhaps, never achieved; and it was all the more wonderful from the small beginning from which the trace had been detected. Having completed the examination, and packed the treasure, which was presently removed to the office, the discoverer set about examining Abram's room; but so cunningly had the whole affair of the resettlement been conducted, that there was not found a trace of any kind to shew his connexion with the burglars. The joke of the man, in reference to the process of melting, had, however, had a narrow escape from being realised; for a kind of furnace had been erected with bricks, and a large crucible, sufficient to hold a Scotch pint of the "silver soup," was lying in what had been used as a coal-bunker. Meanwhile, Reid hurried in in great dejection, because the milk-woman had baffled him by going into a house in one of the wynds, and emerging by the back, and escaping.

"She's provided for," said the officer, "and you may go. I don't need you here; but you may go to Wardrop's Court, top of stair, and help Jones to take care of Four-toes, and George Anderson, called Squint—you know him?"

"Who that has once seen him will ever forget him?" replied the other. "When will Jones be there?"

"Just when you will arrive, giving you time to walk slow, like a good detective."

"And now," said our officer, as he proceeded to fasten up the door, "so much for a casual question,—a good night's work, and a reward of a hundred for recovering a thousand. I think I am entitled to my breakfast. It's not often a man makes so much of a morning." And resuming his deliberate walk—a characteristic, as he himself acknowledged, of a true thief-catcher—he repaired to a coffee-house in Nicolson Street, and allayed his hunger by coffee and a pound of chops. It was about ten o'clock when he reached the office, where he had the pleasant scene presented to him of a well-assorted bag of game—the last victims, Four-toes and Squint, being in the act of being deposited as he entered. The principals secure, the accessories were of less consequence. There were there Abram, Slabberdash, Squint, and Four-toes.

"To complete our complement, we must have Four-toes' mother and Mrs Anderson," he said to the Superintendent, "and Reid and Jones will go and fetch them."

In the course of an hour both these ladies were brought into the already considerable company. That they were all surprised at the unexpected meeting, belongs to reasonable conjecture; and that



Christian Anderson was more surprised than any of them, when she discovered her mistake in trusting her secrets to the "ill-looking scoundrel" of a detective, in place of Abram, is not less reasonable. Our officer was, in truth, too gallant a man to traverse those laws of etiquette which demand respect for the feelings of females, and he never once alluded to the *contre-temps*. But Chirsty did not feel the same delicacy in regard to him, who she feared would hang her for misplaced confidence. She had no sooner recovered from her surprise than she cried out to him, in a shrill, piercing voice—

"I hope you'll hae mercy on me, sir. It wad do ye nae guid to stretch the wizzened craig o' an auld woman, because some silly words—I wish they had choket me—cam out o't."

"They will never be brought against you," said he; "make yourself easy on that score."

"Then what am I here for?" she growled, as, relieved somewhat from her fear, she got into her natural temper.

"For agreeing to hide stolen property."

"Stolen property!" she replied. "And did ye no steal from me my secret about my puir laddie, that ye may string him to a wuddy? There's an auld sayin', that speech is silvern, but silence is gowden. Whaur is the difference between stealing frae me the siller o' my speech, and robbing a man o' the siller o' his jugs and tea-spoons?"

"Quiet," he said, calmly. "Abram, I want to

“speak with you. Separate these,” he added, addressing one of the men.

And having got Abram by himself, he asked him if he was inclined to run the risk of a trial and condemnation, or tell the truth, and trust to the Royal mercy. The Jew hesitated; but our officer knew that a hesitating criminal is like a hesitating woman—each waits for an argument to resolve them against their faith and honour. He knew that misfortune breaks up the bonds of etiquette, even among the virtuous; and that the honour among themselves, of which thieves boast, and a portion of mankind, for some strange reason, secretly approve, becomes weak in proportion to the danger of retributive justice. Not much given to speculate, he yet sometimes wondered why it was that one should be despised and treated harshly because he comes forward to serve the ends of justice and benefit society; but a less acute mind may feel no difficulty in accounting for the anomaly. The King’s evidence, while he proves himself a coward and false to his faith, acts from pure selfishness; and though he offers a boon to society, it is in reality a bargain which he drives for self-preservation. These speculations certainly did not pass through the mind of Abram, if his prevailing thought was not more likely in the form—

“If I can’t get my pound of silver out of the Christian, I can at least keep my own pound of flesh.”

But whether he thought in this Jewish form or not, it is certain that he was not long in making as clean a breast as a Jew might be expected to make, of the whole secret of the robbery. It was planned and executed, he said, by Slabberdash and Squint, and he agreed to become resetter on the condition of being allowed to retain a half of the proceeds. Four-toes brought the plate to him at half a dozen courses of her pitchers, and he had intended on that very day to melt all that was meltable. The watches and rings were to be reserved for opportunities, as occasions presented.

I give this story by way of an example of those strange workings in a close society, whereby often great events are discovered from what is termed chance. Such concurrences, however they may startle us, are all explainable by the laws of probabilities. They occur often just in proportion to the increase of ramifications in civilised conditions. More people come into the plot; the increased activity drives the culprits to shifts, and these shifts are perilous from the very circumstance of being forced. We thus find detection often more easy and certain in populous towns, with a good staff of criminal officers, than in quieter places, where both plotters and shifts are proportionally fewer. If nature is always true to her purpose, so art, which is second nature, is equally true to hers, and man is better provided for than he deserves. I do not concern myself with the vulgar subject of punishments,

never very agreeable to polite minds, and not at all times useful to those who gloat over descriptions of them. It is enough to say that the law was justly applied. Two got clear off—the mothers of Squint and Four-toes; and I may add that Chirsty Anderson probably afterwards acted up more to her own proverb, that “speech is silver, but silence is golden.”

## **The Woman with the White Mice.**

---

MANY have, doubtless, both heard and read of the case of murder in which Jeffrey performed his greatest feat of oratory and power over a jury, and in which, while engaged in his grand speech of more than six hours, he caught, from an open window, the aphony which threatened to close up his voice for ever afterwards. I have had occasion to notice the wants in reported cases tried before courts, and in reference to the one I have now mentioned, I have reason, from my inquiries, to know that the most curious details of the transaction are not only not to be found in the report, but not even suggested, if they do not, in some particulars, appear to be opposed to the public testimony. The agent of the panel sits behind the counsel, delivering to him sometimes very crude materials for the defence, and the counsel sifts that matter; sometimes taking a handful of the chaff to blind a jurymen or a judge, but more often casting it away as either useless or dangerous. In that unused chaff there are often pickles not of the kind put into the sack, and again laid as an offer-

ing before the blind goddess, but of a different kind of grain—nor often less pleasant, or, if applied, less acceptable to justice.

In a certain month in the year 18—, a writer in Dundee, of the name of David M—, was busy in his office, in a dark street off the High Street; busy, no doubt, in discharging the functions of that office represented by Æsop as occupied by a monkey, holding the scales between the litigating cats. He heard a horse stop at his office door, as if brought suddenly up by a jerk of the rein.

“There is haste here,” he thought; “what is up?”

And presently the door opened, and there came, or rather rushed, in a man, of the appearance of a country farmer, greatly more excited than these douce men generally are—except, perhaps, in the midst of a plentiful harvest-home—splashed up with mud to the back of the neck, and breathing as hard as, no doubt, the horse was that carried him.

“What is it, Mr S——?” inquired the writer, as he looked at his client.

“A dreadful business!” replied he; and he turned, went back to the door, shut it, and tested the hold of the lock, then laying down his hat and whip, and pulling off his big-coat, he drew a chair so near the writer, that the man of the law, *brusque* and even jolly as he was, instinctively withdrew his, as if he feared an appeal for money.

"What is the business?" again asked the writer, as he saw the man in a spasmodic difficulty to begin.

"We are all ruined at D——!" he at length said; "Mrs S—— is in your jail, hard-by, on a charge of murder."

"Mrs S——! of all the women in the world!" ejaculated the writer in unfeigned amazement—"murder of whom?"

"Of a servant at D——," replied Mr S——; "one of our own women."

"And what could be the motive?"

"The young woman," continued S——, "had been observed to be pregnant, and the report was got up that my son was the party responsible and blameable. Then the charge is, that my wife gave the girl poison, either to procure abortion, or to take away her life. The woman is dead and buried; but, I believe, her body has been taken up out of the grave and examined, and poison found in the stomach."

"An ugly account," said the writer. "I mean not ugly as regards the evidence, of which, as yet, I have heard nothing. I could say beforehand that I don't believe the authorities will be able to bring home an act of this kind to so rational and respectable a woman, as I have known Mrs S—— to be; but, if you wish me to get her off, you must allow me to look at the case as if she were guilty."

"Guilty!" echoed the man, with a shudder.

"Yes. Were I to go fumbling about in an affair of this kind, acting upon a notion—whatever I may think or feel—that Mrs S——, though your wife, *could not* possibly do an act of that kind, I would neither hound up, as I ought, the investigations of the prosecutor, nor get up proper evidence—not to meet their proofs only, but to overturn them."

"I would have thought you would have been keener to get off an innocent person—a wife, and the mother of a family, too—than a guilty one," said S——.

"We cannot get you people to understand these things," replied the writer; "but so it is, at least with me, and I rather think a good number of my brethren. We have a pride in getting off a guilty person; whereas we have only a spice of satisfaction in saving an innocent one. Perhaps I have an object, for your own sake, in speaking thus frankly to you; and I tell you at once, that if you intend to help me to get off your wife, you must, as soon as you can—even here, at this moment—renounce all blind confidence in her innocence."

"Terrible condition!" said the farmer.

"Not pleasant, but useful. How, in God's name, am I to know how to doctor, purge, or scarify, or anoint a testimony against you, unless I know that it exists, and where to find it?"

"Very true," rejoined the farmer, trying to follow the clever "limb."



"Don't hesitate. I will have more pleasure, and not, maybe, much less hope, in hearing you detail all the grounds of your suspicion against your wife, than in listening to your nasaling and canting about her innocence. All this is for your good, my dear sir, take it as you will."

"I believe it," said the farmer, "and will try to act up to what you say; but I cannot, of my own knowledge, say much, as yet. These things are done privately, within the house, and a farmer is mostly out of doors."

"Well, away, get access to your wife, ferret everything out of her, as well for her as against her; if she bought poison, where she bought it, what rats were to be poisoned, how it was applied, how she communicated with the girl, and where, and all and everything you can gather; question your servants all they saw or heard; your son, what he has to say; ascertain who came about the house, how affected towards the girl, whether there were more lovers than your son, whether the girl was melancholy, or hopeful, and likely to do the thing or not; but, above all, keep it ever in view that your wife is in prison, and suspected, and let me know every item you can bring against her. Away; and lose no time, for I see it's a matter of neck and neck between her and the prosecutor, and, consequently, neck and noose, or neck and no noose, between her and the hangman."

Utterly confounded by this array of instructions,

the poor farmer sat and looked blank. It was impossible he could remember all he had been requested to do—and the duty of finding out facts to criminate the wife who had lived with him so long in love and confidence, bore down upon him with a weight he could hardly sustain.

“I will do what I can,” he said.

“You must do *more* than you can,” said the writer; “but, again I say, let me know every, the smallest item you can discover against your wife.”

And, thus charged, Mr S—— mounted his horse, and rode home to a miserable house with a miserable heart.

Extraordinary as the case was, it was intrusted to the charge of an extraordinary man, well remembered yet throughout that county, and much beyond it. In personal respects he was strong, broad, and muscular, with a florid countenance never out of humour, and an eye that flashed in so many different directions, that it was impossible to arrest it for two moments at a time; all action, nothing resisted him; all impulse and sensibility, nothing escaped his observation; yet, no one could say that any subject retained his mind for more time than would have sufficed another merely to glance at it. He could speak to a hundred men in a day upon a hundred topics, and sit down and run off twenty pages of a paper without an hour of previous meditation; break off at a pronoun, at a call to the further end of the town; drink as much

in a few minutes' conversation with a client as would have taken another an hour to enjoy; and return and finish his paper in less time than another would take to think of it. Always, to appearance, off his guard, he was always master of his position, nor could any obstacle make him stand and calculate its dimensions—it must be surmounted or broken, if his head or the laws should be broken with it; always pressing, he never seemed to be impressed, and the gain or loss of a case was equally indifferent to him. His passion was action, his desire money; but the money went as it came—made without effort and spent without reason. Yet no man hated him; most loved him; few admired him; and even those he might injure by his apparent recklessness could not resist the good nature by which he warded off every attack.

He saw at once, after he had dismissed S——, that he had got hold of a desperate case, and also that he behoved to have recourse to desperate means; but it seemed to take no grip of his mind for more than a few minutes, by the end of which he was full swing in some other matter of business, to be followed with the same rapidity by something else, and, probably, after that, pleasure till three in the morning, when he would be carried home to an elegant house in a certain species of carriage with one wheel. Nor had even that consummation any effect on to-morrow's avocations, for which he would be ready at the earliest hour; and in this

case he *was* ready. He set about his inquiries, first proceeding to D—— to get a view of the premises—the room where the young woman lay, where the son slept, and the bed-room of the mother—and ascertain whether the premises permitted of intercourse with the servants unknown to the farmer and his wife. He next began his precognition of those connected with the house, and, on returning to town, procured access to Mrs S——.

The jail of Dundee was at that time over the court-house—a miserable den of a few dark rooms, presenting the appearance of displenished garrets, with small grated windows and a few benches. Here the woman sat revolving, no doubt, in her mind all the events of a life of comfort and respectability, and now under the risk of being brought to a termination by her body being suspended in the front of that building where she had seen before this terrible consummation of justice enacted with the familiar and dismal forms of the tragedy of the gallows. We write of these things as parrots gabble, we read of them as monkeys ogle the, to them, strange actions of human beings; but what is all that comes by the eye or the ear of the experiences of an exterior spirit to the workings of that spirit in its own interior world, where thought follows thought with endless ramifications, weaving and interweaving scenes of love and joy and pain, contrasting and mixing, dissolving and remixing—

bright lights and dark shadows—all seen through the blue-tinged and distorting lens of present shame? We cannot realise these things, nor did the writer try. He had only the practical work to do—if possible, to get this woman's neck kept out of a kench; nor did it signify much to him how that was effected; but effected it would be, if the invention of one man could do it, and if that failed, and the woman was suspended, it would trouble him no more than would the loss of a small-debt case.

"Sorry to see you in this infernal place, Mrs S——," he said, as he threw himself upon a bench. "I must get you out, that's certain; but I can promise you that certainty only upon the condition of making a clean breast; only to me, you know."

"I know only that I never poisoned the woman," replied she.

"Do you want to be hanged?" said he, with the reckless abruptness so peculiar a feature of his character, at the same time taking a rapid glance of her demeanour. He knew all about the firmness derived from the confidence of innocence, of which a certain class of rhapsodists make so much in a heroic way, and yet he had always entertained the heterodoxical notion that guilt is a firmer and often more composed condition than innocence, inasmuch as his experience led him to know that the latter is shaky, anxious, and sensitive, and the former stern and imperturbable. Nor did his quick mind want reasons for shewing that such ought,

by natural laws, to be the case ; for it is never to be lost sight of, that, in so far as regards murder, which requires for its perpetration a peculiar form of mind and a most unnatural condition of the feelings, the same hardness of nerve which enables a man or woman to do the deed, serves equally well the purpose of helping them to stand up against the shame, while the innocent person, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand,—the probable proportion of those who *cannot* kill—has not the fortitude to withstand the ignominy, simply because he wants the power to slay. So without, in his heart, prejudging the woman, he drew his conclusions, true or false, from the impassibility of her demeanour. Her answer was ready :

“How could they hang an innocent woman?”

“But they *do* hang hundreds, who say just what you say,” replied he. “What are you to make of that riddle? Come, did you ever buy any poison?—please leave out the rats.”

“No; neither for rats nor servants,” was the composed reply.

“And you never gave the woman a dose?”

“Yes; I have given her medicine more than once.”

“Oh, a capital thing to save life; but you know her life was not saved. She died and was buried, and has been taken up; and I suspect it was not your jalap that was found in the body. But what interest had you in being so very kind to the

woman who was to bring shame on your family by bearing a child to your son?"

"I never knew she was in that way; but though I had known it, I could not have taken away her life."

"Then, who gave her the poison?"

"I do not know."

"And cannot even suspect any one?"

"No."

"Good-bye!" he said, as he started up and hurried away; muttering to himself, as the jailor undid the bolts, "Always the same!—the women are always innocent; and yet we see them stretching ropes other than clothes' ropes every now and then."

Defeated, but as little discomfited, as we might gather from his pithy soliloquy, his next step was to double up, as he termed it, the authorities, who, he knew, would never have gone the length of apprehending the woman without having got hold of evidence sufficient to justify Sir William Rae, the Lord Advocate, a considerate and prudent man, that the charge lay heavy on the prisoner. He had no right of access, at this stage, to the names of the intended witnesses; but to a man of his activity it is no difficult matter to find these out, from the natural garrulity of the people, and a kind of self-importance in being a crown testimony. Then to find them out was next to drawing them out, for it may be safely said for our writer that there

was no man, from the time of John Wilkes, who could exercise a more winning persuasion; one by one he ferreted them out, wheedled, threatened, adjured, but found himself resisted in every attempt to break them down or to turn them to him. At every stage of his inquiry he saw the case for the prisoner assuming a dark aspect, as dark, he so termed it, as the face of a hanged culprit.

"The beagles have got a track. There are more foxes in the cover than one; and shall it be said I, David M——, cannot beat out another as stimulating to the nose?"

In a quarter of an hour after having made this observation to himself, he was posting on horseback to the farm of D——, where he arrived in as short a time as he generally took on his journeys.

"I am afraid to ask you for intelligence," said the farmer, as he stood by the horse's side, and addressed the writer, who kept his seat.

"Get me two and five-eighths of a glass of whisky in a jug of milk, and I'll tell you then what I want. I have no time to dismount."

The farmer complied.

"The case looks ugly," said the writer, as he handed back the jug; "these witnesses would hang a calendared saint of a hundred miracles. Are any tramps in the habit of coming about you?"

"Too many."

"Do you know any of them?"

"Scarcely—not by name."



"Any women?—never mind the men," said the writer, impatiently.

"Yes; there is one who used to come often; she sold small things."

"Is that all you know of her? Has she no mark, man? Is her nose long or short? no squint, lame leg, or pock-pits?"

"She had usually a small cage, in which she kept a couple of white mice."

"White mice!" ejaculated the writer; "never was a better mark."

"You don't know her name?"

"No; nor do I think any of my present people do."

"When was she here last?"

"About a month ago."

"Anywhere near the time of the girl's death?"

"Ay, just about that time, or maybe a week before."

"And you can give me no trace of her?"

"None whatever, except that I think I saw her take to the east, in the way to Arbroath. But I do not see how she can be of any use."

"I don't want you to see that she can be of any use," said the writer, laughing; "but I want you to hear whereabout she is."

"I will try what I can," said the farmer.

"And let me know by some messenger who can ride as fast as I can." Then adding, "Gilderoy was saved by a *brown* mouse, which gnawed the

string by which the key of the jail door of Forfar hung on a nail, whereby the key fell to the ground, and was pulled by him through an opening at the bottom. Heard you ever the story?"

"No."

"But it's true, nevertheless. What would you say if a *white* mouse, or two of them, should save the life of your wife?"

"I would say it was wonderful," replied the farmer, with eyes a-goggled by amazement.

"And so would I," answered Mr M——, as he put the rowels into the side of his horse and began a hard trot, which he would not slacken till he was at the Cowgate port, and not even then, for he made his way generally through the streets of the town with equal rapidity, and always the safer that he was the "fresher."

On arriving at his office he sat down, and, without apparently any premeditation, unless what he had indulged in during his trot, wrote off with his usual rapidity four letters to the following effect:—"Dear Sir,—As agent for Mrs S——, who now lies in our jail on a charge of murder, I request you will endeavour to find some trace of a woman who goes through the country with a cage and two white mice. Grave suspicions attach to her, as the person who administered the poison, and I wish your energies to be employed in aiding me to search her out." The letters were directed to agents in Arbroath, Forfar, Kirriemuir, and Mon-

trose, and immediately committed to a clerk to be taken to the post-office, with a good-natured laugh on the lips of the writer—and, within the teeth, the little monologue—"The wrinkled skin easily conceals a scar."

From some source or another, probably the true one may be guessed, an *uberrima fides* began to hang round a report that a new feature had spread over the face of Mrs S——'s case; and that, in place of her being the guilty person, the culprit was a tramp, with white mice in a cage. Nor were the authorities long in being startled by the report; but where that woman was no one could tell, and a vague report was no foundation for authoritative action. But if it was not for a Lord Advocate to seek out or hunt after white mice, that was no reason why the prisoner's agent should not condescend to so very humble an office; and, accordingly, two days after the despatch of the letters I have mentioned, the same horse that carried the writer on the former occasion, and knew so well the prick of his rowels, was ready saddled at the door of the office. The head of the agent was instantly drawn out of some other deep well of legal truth, some score of directions given to clerks, and he was off on the road to Glamis, but not before some flash had shewn him what he was to do when he got there. The same rapid trot was commenced, and continued, to the great diminution of the sap of the animal, until the

place he was destined for loomed before him. He now commenced inquiries upon inquiries. Every traveller was questioned, every door got a touch of his whip, until, at length, he got a trace, and he was again in full pursuit. I think it is Suidas who says that these pretty little animals, called white mice, are very amatory, and have a strong odour, but this must be only to their mates. I doubt if even the nostrils of a writer are equal to this perception, whatever sense they may possess in the case of pigeons with a pluckable covering. But, however this may be, it was soon observable that our pursuer had at least something in his eye. The spurs were active; and, by and by, he drew up at a small road-side change-house, into the kitchen of which he tumbled, without a premonitory question, and there, before him, sat the veritable mistress of these very white mice, spacing the fortunes of some laughing girls, who saw the illuminated figures of their lovers in the future.\*

"Can you read me *my* fortune?" he said, in his own peculiar way.

"Na; I ken ye oure weel," was the quick reply, as she turned a pair of keen, gray eyes on him.

"Well, you'll speak to me at any rate," he said; "I have something to say to you."

And, going into the adjoining parlour, he called

\* One version of the story says that Mr M—— picked up the tramp at Cammerton, in Fife; but I adhere to my authority.

for a half-mutchkin. He needed some himself, and he knew the tramp was not an abstainer.

"Tell the woman to come ben," he said, as the man placed the whisky on the table.

"What can you want, Mr M——, with that old, never-mènd vagabond?"

"Perhaps an uncle has left her five hundred pounds," said the writer, with a chuckle.

"Gude save us! the creature will go mad," said the man, as he went out, not knowing whether his guest was in humour or earnest.

But, whatever he had said to the woman, there she was, presently, white mice and all, seated alongside of the writer, who could make a beggar or a baron at home with him, with equal ease, and in an equally short time.

"You're obliged to me, I think, if I can trust to a pretty long memory," he said, handing her a glass of the spirits.

"Ay; but it doesna need a lang memory to mind gi'en me this," she replied, not wishing any other reason for her obligation.

"And you've forgotten the pirn scrape?"

"The deil's in a lang memory; but I hinna," she replied, with more confidence, for, by this time, the whisky had disappeared in the accustomed bourne of departed spirits.

"Weel, it's a bad business that at your auld freend's, at D——," said he, getting into his Scotch, for familiarity. "Hae ye heard?"

"Wha hasna heard? I kenned the lassie brawly; but I didna like her—she was never gude to a puir cratur like me."

"But they say ye ken mair than ither folk?" said he.

"Maybe I do," replied the woman, getting proud of the impeachment. "Hae we nae lugs and een, ay, and stamachs, like ither folk?"

"And could ye do naething to save this puir woman, the wife o' a gude buirdly man, wi' an open hand to your kin, and the mither o' a family?"

"I care naething aboot her being the wife o' a man, or the mither o' a family—but I ken what I ken."

"And sometimes what ye dinna ken, when you tell the lasses o' their lovers ye never saw."

"The deil tak their louping hearts into his hand for silly gawkies—if they werena a' red-wood about lads, they wadna heed me a whistle. But, though I might try to get Mrs S——'s head out o' the loop, I wadna like to put my ain in."

"I'll tak gude care o' that," said the writer; "I got ye out o' a scrape before."

"Weel than"——

"And weel than," echoed he.

"And better than weel than; suppose I swore I did it mysel'—and maybe I did, that's no your business—they wadna hang a puir wretch like me for her ain words, wad they, when there's nae proof I did it but my ain tongue?"

"No likely," replied he; "and then a hunder gowden guineas as a present, no as a bribe"——

"I want nae bribes—I gie value for my fortunes. If it's wind, wind is the breath o' life; a present!"

"Would mak your een jump," added he, finishing his sentence.

"Jump! ay, loup! whaur are they?"

"You will get the half when you come into the town, and the other when Mrs S—— is safe. You will ca' at my office on Wednesday; and, after that, I'll tak care o' you. In the meantime, ye maun sell your mice."

"Geordie Cameron offered me five shillings for them; I'll gie them to him."

"No," replied the writer; "no to a *man*. Ken ye nae woman-tramp will tak them, and shew them about as you do?"

"Ou ay; I'll gie them to Meg Davidson, wha's to be here the night. But whaurfor no Geordie?"

"Never ye mind that, I ken the difference; and if Meg doesna give you the five shillings, I will."

"Weel, buy them yoursel'," said the woman.

"Done," said he; "there's five guineas for them, and you can gie them to Meg as a present. Now, are ye firm?"

"Firm!" she cried, as she clutched the money, and gave a shrill laugh, from a nerve that was never softened by pity or penitence; "I think nae

mair o't, man—sir, I mean, for ye proved yoursel' a gentleman to me afore—than I now do in spaeing twins to your wife, at her next doun-lying."

A rap on the table, from the bottom of the pewter measure, brought in the landlord.

"Fill that again," said the writer.

And the man having re-entered with the pewter measure—

"You're to give this woman board and lodging for a day or two, and I will pay you before I start."

"That will be oot o' the five hundred frae her uncle," said the man, laughing. "She's my leddy noo; but what will become o' the mice?"

"There's Meg Davidson passing the window e'en noo," said the woman.

"Send her in," said the writer, to the change-house keeper.

The woman going under this name was immediately introduced by the man, with a kind of mock formality; for he could not get quit of the impression that his old customer had really succeeded to the five hundred pounds—a sum, in his estimation, sufficiently large to insure respect.

"Maggy," said the writer, "tak this chair, and here's a dram. What think ye?"

"I dinna ken."

"Ye're to get the twa white mice and the cage for naething, and this dram to boot."

Meg's face cleared up like a June sun come out in a burst.



"Na," she said; "ye're joking."

"But it's upon a condition," rejoined he.

"Weel, what is 't—that I'm to feed them weel, and keep them clean?"

"You'll do that, too," said he, laughing, "for they're valuable creatures, and bonny; but you're to say you've had them for a year."

"For twa, if you like," replied the woman; "a puir fusionless lee that, and no worth sending a body to the deil for."

"Here they are," said the tramp, "and you're to tak care o' them. They've been my staff for mony a day, and they're the only creatures on earth I care for and like; for they never said to me, 'Get out, ye wretch,' or banned me for a witch; but were aye sae happy wi' their pickles o' barley, and, maybe, a knot o' sugar, when I could get at a farmer's wife's bowl."

Even hags have pathetic moods. Meg was affected, and the writer, having appreciated the virtue, whispered into the ear of his *protege*, "Seven o'clock on Wednesday night," and left them to the remainder of the whisky. At the door he settled with the man, and, mounting his horse, which he had ordered a bottle of strong ale for, in addition to his oats, he set off at his old trot.

"Now let the crown blood-hounds catch Meg Davidson and her mice," he said, as he pushed on.

The writer was, no doubt, bent eagerly for home, but he seldom got to his intended destination.

though we have given one or two examples of an uninterrupted course, without undergoing several stoppages, either from the sudden calls of business, which lay in every direction, or the seductions of conviviality, equally ubiquitous; and, on this occasion, he was hailed from the window of the inn by some ten-tumbler men of Forfar, whose plan for draining the loch, by making toddy of it, had not, to their discomfort, been realised, but who made due retaliation by very clean drainings elsewhere. The moment he heard the shout he understood the meaning thereof, because he knew the house, the locality, and the men; and Meg Davidson and her mice were passed into the wallet-bag of time, till he should give these revellers their satisfaction in a boon companion who could see them under the table, and then mount his horse, with a power of retention of his seat unexampled in a county famous for revolutions of heads as well as of bodies. Dismounting from his horse, he got his dinner, a meal he had expected at Dundee; and, in spite of the distance of fourteen miles which lay before him, he despatched tumbler after tumbler without being once tempted to the imprudence of letting out his extraordinary hunt, but rather with the prudence of sending, through his comptators, to the county town the fact that a woman who perambulated the country with white mice was really the murderer of the country girl. This statement he was able to make, even at that

acme of his dithyrambicism, when, as usual, he got upon the head of the table to make his speech of the evening. It was now eleven, and he had swallowed eight tumblers, yet he was comparatively steady when he mounted; and, though during the fourteen miles he swung like a well-ballasted barque in a gale of wind, he made sufficient headway to be home by half-past twelve.

Next morning, as ready and able as usual for the work of the day, he was at his desk about eleven, and when engaged with one client, while others were waiting to be despatched in the way in which he alone could discharge clients, he was waited on by a gentleman connected with the Crown Office. Having been yielded a preference, the official took his seat.

"I understand you are employed for Mrs S——?" he said. "We have thought it necessary, as disinterested protectors of the lives of the king's subjects, to apprehend this woman. I need not say that our precognitions are our guarantee; but I have heard a report which would seem to impugn our discretion, if it do not shame our judgment, insomuch that, if it be true, we have seized the wrong person. Do you know anything of this woman with the white mice, who takes upon herself the burden of a self-accusation? Of course it is for you to help us to her as the salvation of your client."

"Too evident that for a parade of candour,"

replied Mr M——. "Her name is Margaret Davidson. Her white companions will identify her. Her residence is where you may chance to find her."

"Very vague, considering your interest," replied the other. "Where did you find her?"

"Ask me first, my dear sir, whether I have found her. Perhaps not. If it is my interest to search her out, it is not less your duty to catch her. A vagrant with white mice is a kenspeckle, and surely you can have no difficulty in tracing her. I need scarcely add, that when you do find her, you will substitute her for my client, and make amends for the disgrace you have brought upon an innocent woman and a respectable family."

"I won't say that," replied the other, shaking his head. "The evidence against Mrs S—— is too heavy to admit of our believing a vagrant, influenced by the desire of, perhaps, a paid martyrdom, or the excitement of a mania."

"Then, why ask me to help you to find her?"

"For our satisfaction as public officers."

"And to my detriment as a private agent."

"Not at all."

"Yes, if I chose to make her a witness for the defence, and leave the jury to judge of *paid* martyrdom, or her real madness. Paid martyrdom!—paid by whom?"

"Not necessarily by you."

"But you want me to help you to be able to prove the bribe out of her own mouth, don't you?"

"Of course we would examine her."

"Yes, and cook her—but you must catch her first. Really, my dear sir, a very useful recipe in cuisine; and, hark ye, you can put the mice in the pan also. But, really, I am not bound, and cannot in justice be expected, to do more. I have given you her name, and when had a culprit so peculiar and striking a designation as being the proprietor of a peripatetic menagerie?"

"Ridiculous!"

"Yes, *ridiculus mus!* But are you not the labouring mountain yourself, and do you not wish me to become the midwife?"

"I perceive I can make nothing of you," at length said the gentleman. "You either don't want to save your client, or the means you trust to cannot stand the test."

"God bless my soul!" roared the writer; "must I tell you again that I have given you her name and occupation? Even a cat, with nose-instinct put awry by the colour of the white race of victims, would smell her out."

Bowing the official to the door with these words, he was presently in some other ravelled web, which he disentangled with equal success and apparent ease; but, following him in his great scheme, we find him in the afternoon post-

ing again to the farm. He found the farmer in the same collapse of hope, sitting in the arm-chair so long pressed by his wife, with his chin upon his breast, and his eyes dim and dead. The evidence had got piece by piece to his ear, paralysing more and more the tissues of his brain; and hope had assumed the character of an impossibility in the moral world of God's government.

"You must cheer up," said the writer. "Come, some milk and whisky. Move about; I have got good news for you, but cannot trust you."

The head of the man was raised up, and a slight beam was, as it were, struck from his eye by the jerk of a sudden impulse. His step, as he moved to gratify the agent, seemed to have acquired even a spring.

"Why are you here," he said, as he brought the indispensable jug, with something even more than the five-eighths of the spiritual element added to the two glasses, "if you cannot tell me the grounds of my hope? I could not comprehend what you meant about the woman and the white mice."

"Nor do I want you to understand it; it is enough if I do," replied Mr M——, as he put the jug to his mouth; "but this I want you to understand, in the first place, that I want an order for fifty pounds from you."

The farmer was too happy to write an order for any amount within the limits of his last farthing, and getting pen and ink he wrote the cheque.

"And you couldn't tell me the name of the woman with the mice; but I can tell you," he continued. "It is Margaret Davidson; and, hark ye—come near me, man—if you are called upon by any one with the appearance of a sheriff's beagle, or whatever he may be like, for the name of that woman, say it is Margaret Davidson, and that they will find her between Lerwick and Berwick. Do you comprehend?"

"Perfectly."

"And, moreover, you are to tell every living soul within ear-shot, servants or strangers, that it was that very woman who gave the dose to the lass, and that the woman herself does not deny it."

"Gude Lord! but is all this true, Mr M——?"

"Is it true your wife did it, then, you d——d idiot?" cried the writer, using thus one of his most familiar terms, but with perfect good nature. "Don't you in your heart—or hope, at anyrate—think the Lord Advocate a liar? and has his lordship a better right to lie than I or Meg Davidson? Isn't the world a great leavened lump of lies from the Cape of Hope to the Cape of Wrath? And you want your wife hanged, because the nose of truth is out of joint a bit; ay, what though it were cut off altogether, if you get your wife's back without being coloured blue by the hangman? But, I tell you, it's not a lie: the woman with the white mice says it of her own accord."

"Wonderful! the woman with the white mice!"

"The woman with the white mice!" echoed the writer.

And, getting again upon his legs, he hurried out, throwing back his injunctions upon S—— to obey his instructions. In a few minutes more he was again upon the road, leaving the clatter of his horse's hoofs to mingle with the confused thoughts of his mystified client. Arrived at the High Street, where, as used to be said of him, he could not be ten minutes without having seized some five or six persons by the breast of the coat, and put as many questions on various matters of business, just as the thought struck him on the instant, he pounced upon one, no other than the confidential clerk of the fiscal.

"I say, man," seizing and holding him in the usual way, "have you caught the woman yet?"

"What woman?" replied the clerk.

"The woman with the white mice."

"Oh," cried the young man, "we have no faith in that quarter—a mere get-up; but we're looking about for her, notwithstanding."

"Well, tell your master, that Meg Davidson was last seen on the Muir of Rannoch, and that the Highlanders in that outlandish quarter, having never seen white mice before, are in a state of perfect amazement."

A bolt at some other person left the clerk probably in as great amazement as the Highlanders; but our man of the law did not stop to see the



extent of it. All his avocations, however, did not prevent the coming round of that seven o'clock on Wednesday evening, which he had appointed as the hour of meeting with the woman on whom his hopes of saving his client almost altogether rested. He was at his desk at the hour, and the woman, no doubt eager for the phenomenon of the "louping ee," was as true as the time itself. The writer locked the door of his office, and drawing her as near him as possible, inquired first whether any knew she was in town.

"Deil ane," she replied; "naebody cares for me ony mair than I were an auld glandered spavin, ready for the knackers."

"And you've been remembering a' ye are to say?"

Now, the woman did not answer this question immediately. She had been, for some days, busy in the repository of her memory—a crazy box of shattered spunk-wood, through the crevices of which came the lurid lights sent from another box, called the imagination, and such was the close intimacy, or rather mixture, of the revelations of these two magic centres, that they could not be distinguished from one another; but the habit of fortune-telling had so quickened the light of the one, as to make it predominate over, and almost extinguish that of the other, so that she was at a loss to get a stray glimmer of the memory, to make her ready, on the instant, for the answer.

"Remembering! Ay," she said, "there's no muckle to remember. The lass was under the burden of shame, and couldna bear it: she wanted some doctor's trash to tak that burden aff her, if it should carry her life along wi't. I got the stuff, and the woman dee'd."

All which was carefully written down—but the writer had his own way of doing his work. He would have day and date, the place where the doctor's trash was bought, the price thereof, the manner of administering the same, and many other particulars, every one of which was so carefully recorded, that the whole, no doubt, looked like a veritable precognition of facts, got from the said box, called the memory, as if it had been that not one tint of light, from the conterminous chamber, had mixed with the pure spirit of truth.

"Now," said he, regaining his English, when his purpose was served, "you'll stand firm to this, in the face of judge, jury, justice, and all her angels?"

"Never ye fear."

"Then, you will go with me to a private lodging, where I wish you to remain, seen by as few as you can. You're a widow; your name is Mrs Anderson; your husband was drowned in the Maelstrom. Get weeds, a veil, and look respectable."

"A' save the last, for that's impossible."

"Try; and, as you will need to pay for your board and lodging, and your dress, here's the sum I promised ye; the other half when Mrs S—— is saved."

"A' right; and did I no say my ee would loup?—but 'ae gude turn deserves anither,' as the deil said to the loon o' Culloden, when he hauled him down, screaming, to a place ye maybe ken o', and whaur I hae nae wish to be."

"Where is Meg Davidson?" he then asked.

"Oh ay!" she replied, "that puts me in mind o' a man wha met me on the road, and asked me if I was the woman wi' the twa white mice? I tauld him she was awa east, to Montrose, and sae it is."

"Not a cheep of the sale," added he.

"Na, na, nor o' onything else, but just Mrs Anderson, the widow, whase man was drowned in the Maclstream."

And, having thus finished, the writer led the woman to her place of safety, there to lie *in re-tentis*, till the court-day.

That eventful day came round. In the meantime, the prosecution never got access to the real white mouse tramp, and whatever they got out of Meg Davidson, satisfied them that she knew nothing of the murder. Large sums were given to secure the services of Jeffrey, then in the full blaze of his power, and Cockburn, so useful in examinations. The Lord Advocate led his proof, which

was no darker than our writer had ascertained it to be, when he found himself driven to his clever expedient. The proof for the defence began; and, after some other witnesses were examined, the name of the woman with the white mice was called by the macer; and here occurred a circumstance, at the time known to very few. Cockburn turned round to our country agent, who was sitting behind him, and said, in a whisper—

“M——, if the angel Gabriel were at this moment to come down and blow a trumpet, and tell me that what this woman is going to swear to is truth, I would not believe her.”

Nor is there any doubt to be entertained, that the woman's testimony took the court and the audience by surprise. The judges looked at each other, and the jury were perplexed. There was only one thing that produced any solicitude in our writer. He feared the Lord Advocate would lay hands upon her, as either a murderer or a perjurer, the moment she left the witness-box. At that instant was he prepared. Quietly slipping out, he got hold of the woman, led her to the outer door, through a crowd, called to the door-keeper who stood sentry to open for the purpose of letting in a fresh witness of great importance to the accused; and having succeeded, as he seldom failed, he got the woman outside. A cab was in readiness—no time lost—the woman was pushed in, followed by her guardian, and, in a short time, was safely dis-

posed of. Meanwhile, the Crown authorities had been preparing their warrant, and the woman was only saved from their mercies by a very few minutes.

It is well known, as I have already mentioned, that Jeffrey's speech for Mrs S—— was the greatest of all modern orations, yet it was delivered under peculiar circumstances. When he rose and began, he seemed languid and unwell. The wonted sparkle was not seen in his eye, the compressed lip was loose and flaccid, and his words, though all his beginnings were generally marked by a subdued tone, came with difficulty. Cockburn looked at him inquiringly, anxious and troubled. There was something wrong, and those interested in the defence augured ominously. All of a sudden the little man stopped, fixed his eye on one of the walls of the court-room, and cried out, "Shut that window." Through that opening, a cold wind had been blowing upon and chilling a body, which, though firm and compact, was thin, wiry, and delicately toned to the refined requirements of the spirit that animated and moved it with a grace peculiarly his own. The chill, in consonance with well-known pathological laws, produced, first depression, and then a feverish reaction, which latter was even morbidly favourable to the development of his powers. He began to revive; the blood, pulsing with more than natural activity, warmed still more at the call of his enthusiasm. He analysed every part of the cause, tore up the characters of the pro-

secutor's witnesses, held up microscopic flaws, and passed them through the lens of his ingenious exaggeration, till they appeared serious in the eyes of the jury. Then how touching, if not noble, was the conduct of that strange witness for the defence—who, a wretched criminal herself, would yet, under a secret power, so far expiate her guilt, by offering herself as a sacrifice for innocence. Beyond all, was the pathos of his peroration, where he brought home the case to the jury, as loving husbands of loving wives, and tender fathers of beloved children. A woman sat there before them—a wife and a mother. She had undergone an ordeal not much less trying than death itself, and even then she was trembling under the agony of a suspense, extended beyond mortal powers of endurance—to be terminated by the breath of their mouths, either for life and a restoration to a previously happy family, or for a death on a gallows, with all its ignominy.

That speech, which nearly cost Jeffrey his life, saved that of another. The jury found the libel not proven; Mrs S—— was free; Jeffrey was made more famous; but no one ever heard more of THE WOMAN WITH THE WHITE MICE.

## The Knife-thrust in the Dark.

---

IT is not often that a story, apparently so unaccountable upon theories of experience as that I am about to relate in this chapter, is invested with any of the traits of simple truthfulness; yet that character certainly belongs to it. I may state, that having got a hint of the principal incident, I sought out the more minute portions, an inquiry in which I was greatly aided by Mr John Howell. I may also mention, that I believe that that ingenious and ill-requited person once gave a manuscript account of the principal events to an editor of a periodical, and that it appeared afterwards in a form suited to the tastes of the revising critic. As I now give the history, it is divested of its fiction, without being diminished in its interest.

The person who is thus to form the object of our hero-worship for a quarter of an hour—not for his virtues or his achievements, but rather for the interest he draws to himself from one remarkable act of his life, around which almost all his thoughts and feelings afterwards revolved—was William W——n, the only son of a butcher,

resident in the Canongate. The father was reputed rich; and certainly discharged his duty to the boy, in so far as a father could, by sending him to a good school and treating him kindly—yet using a stern severity when the youth contravened, as he often did, his advice and example. And he often did; we should rather say that scarcely a day passed over the head of the young scamp that he was out of a fight, or a row, or a devilish machination. Yet Mr Howell, who, I think, associated with him, says that he was a most inconsistent little wretch, for, while he would delight in getting one of the butchers to allow him to kill a calf, or hunting cats to the death, or terrierising rats, or fighting double stand-ups, or crucifying street eccentricities, he had a kind of weak tenderness about him, which he would display in very soft-looking offices of friendship, or in blubbering at a sentimental story, with much less of the old rugged woodcut pathos in it than in the popular stories of the time—"Gregor's Ghost," "Captain Glen," "Billy Taylor," or "William and Sally"—which exercised such dominion over young sympathies, and which have given place to the novel of our day.

It is almost needless to say that one day this promising youth got into a scrape, for we could not have told when he was out of one, but this peculiar affair—no less than almost beating the life out of one of the sons of a gentleman, who lived in Lothian Hut, and who was one of his father's



best customers—was so obnoxious to the old man; that he threatened him with a species of thong, well known to butchers, and the effects of which made his flesh tingle at the bare mention of its name. He had not gone home to dinner, nor would he. The horror of that thong haunted him; it made his hair stand on end, till, as he said afterwards, his bonnet almost moved; it thrilled through him, it made his eye roll wildly like the orbit-swirl of epilepsy. To go home was simply an impossibility, and that ended the question—but where was he to go? If to a friend's, he would be sent home, and he had no money to flee with. He prowled through the streets till nine o'clock, when a companion, of the name of Kemp, got him advised to go down to the house of an old woman, called Jenny Morison, in Bell's Close. Kemp had the command, through the kindness of an aunt, of the sum of threepence, and that would leave four farthings of a remainder, after satisfying the demands of the lodging-keeper. Kemp saw him also housed, and giving him, somewhat grandly, the loan, left him to his night's rest.

He was not known to the woman, nor the woman to him, yet she felt for him; and, having given him a plate of porridge, sent him to his cell. It was a miserable place—damp walls, rat-holes, intolerable smells—a small bed in a corner—a chair. He cast off his clothes, with no more light than a moonbeam, and jumped in—scarcely *amongst*

clothes, only under a coarse coverlet. He had wandered all day, and was exhausted; his fancy and flesh were at war—his eyelids drooped, and yet his brain burned—shame, vexation, fear, anxiety, fought against sleep; and sleep in the flesh would conquer all his emotions. And it did; he was beyond the reach of the thong, even in dreams.

But his relief was not to last. He awoke about two in the morning, and soon ascertained that it was a noise had scared sleep. He listened—the noise was over-head, and he rose and knocked on the boards, which served for the floor above, and which were easily within his reach as he stood on the truckle. In doing this, he looked up, and saw, at one or two parts, openings in the planks, through which slight glimmerings of light came. He lay down again, and was again asleep, when he was once more roused by a noise resembling wrestling and bumping on the floor, with occasional moans or groans. The thought occurred to him that there was some terrible scuffle going on between fiercely contending parties, and he was confirmed in this by some broken words, which, when he put them together—a work in which the fancy had probably some share—he thought he could distinguish a cry to “tie his feet.” The near proximity of a fight, even in the form of a variety from what, in his contentious and excited life, he loved so well, had now no charms for him, unless he could have got into the midst of it; but, as matters stood with

him, he felt enraged at being twice roused from that rest which liberated him from the miserable thoughts of his situation. The whole world he would have given for relief from the gnawing worm within, and this one cause kept him in the torture which nature was doing her best to relieve him from. The scuffle was not finished, the thumping came loud and louder, and the trailing and rubbing on the floor were, if possible, increased. He knocked again, but his intimated displeasure produced no pause. Meanwhile the fever of pain and bodily exhaustion increased upon a temperament fiery and imperious; and, clenching his teeth, he uttered cursings, even worse than the streets of Edinburgh witness from her younger children. Again he knocked, and again he was unheeded. There was offended pride of power now mixing with his other feelings, for he was, in truth, a young tyrant, whose highest ambition it was to rule his own little world of blackguard chums.


"Devil take you!" at length he uttered, "but I will silence you."

And the next moment he was on the floor, searching for a long butcher's gully, which it was his delight to carry about with him, and with which he had cut the throat of many a grimalkin. The touch of his father's professional instrument—become to him, by habit and inclination, like that of the tomahawk to the wild Indian—seemed to collect together every one of his distracting feelings, his

anger, his misery, his fevered palpitations, into one energy. Got hold of it—he rejoiced in the glance it gave, as he waved it in the light of the moon, who, having risen higher, and got through obstructing clouds, shone full and bright into the cellar. He sprang upon the bed, which creaked with the sudden leap, and it just so happened that the noise was at that moment at its height. The glimmering of the light through the openings, now rendered faint by the moonlight, still enabled him to find a chink, along which he run his finger, till he came to the spot where it seemed a down-trodden individual was resisting opponents. The dull sound in the wood directed him, and feeling for the continuation of the chink, he thrust in the point of the blade—a stern thrust—up went the knife to the hilt—a cry of agony, like nothing he had ever heard on earth—and a drop, dropping, of blood, which increased to a gush—warm, as it fell on his face, and blinding him, and saturating his shirt.

Not a moment was now to be lost. He sprang again to the floor. He had been a fearless youth, but he felt now, for the first time, that his hand had accomplished something which awed and stupefied him. He had committed a murder, a murder of a human creature: and the instinct which guards our common nature wrought within him, indicating the distinction between an immortal being and a brute. Hurrying on his clothes, he was dressed in a few minutes; his effort was to flee, but he

had remaining in him some calculation. He wiped the gully—thought for a moment what to do with it—and coming quickly to the conclusion that it would discover him if he threw it away, put it into his coat pocket. The sash resisted him, but the vigour of his despair overcame the obstacle—he was on the ground. Looking about, he found himself in the next close, a place which he well knew, and where he had often hidden in his games of search. Taking to the supple points of his toes, he flew down the High Street, turned into Leith Wynd, escaped the night watch, and was on his way to Leith. His excitement and rapid movements made him perspire violently, so that the bloody shirt, which had been sticking to his skin, smoked, and sent up into his nostrils the steam of what he was sure was the murdered man or woman's blood. Yet he hurried on, increasing his speed as he got farther away from the scene, and as the imagination got time to work up its pictures. Nor did he stop till he was met by an obstacle, which he might in vain try to surmount—no other than the margin of the sea, at the foot of Baltic Street, and there he stood. The check to his course seemed to have the effect of somewhat reining up his wild thoughts, and a trace of his constitutional resolution was shewn as he paused, crossed his arms, and cast his eye upon the sea, as it lay calm and placid, under a clear, full, midnight moon. So strangely formed a being is man, that



although he was certain he had killed a human being who never injured him, though only two miles distant from the fatal spot, though only twenty minutes had elapsed since he made the knife-thrust, the objects had already enough of distance, in both time and space, to allow of giving precedence to a mere bodily feeling. The present evil dominates; a bodily twinge rules the imagination. The sticking shirt annoyed him—yea, a mere skin annoyance, a slight pathological touch, kept for a time at bay the visions which had chased him all that distance as a maniac. It might have been that he could not bear the blood, and that he felt the shirt as a damning evidence against him; yet he confessed afterwards, that the feeling that ruled him at that moment was a wish to be relieved from the irksomeness of the adhesion. He pulled off his jacket and waistcoat, drew his shirt over his head, and threw it down; and having proceeded so far, he resolved on washing away from his body all traces of the blood. His trousers and stockings followed, and he stood naked, ready to wade in.

At that moment he heard a shout behind him, "Stop there, ho!" and, on looking round, he saw two dark figures running towards him, from the direction of Baltic Street. Fear, in certain high states, is folly. There is something wrong about our mechanism: instincts of self-preservation become inflamed into passion, and lead the other

way. He snatched up his clothes—all but the bloody shirt, which he felt himself restrained from touching—and took flight along the sands towards Bathfield. Nor did he slacken his pace for an instant in obedience to the halloo, which reached his ear only to quicken his energies. Even though the sounds ceased, and there was no indication of the figures having continued their pursuit, he still ran, as if for a wager, and slackened only when he was well on to the Figgate Whins. In all this course, it could not be but that he would be seen. The moon was still bright, and it was now three in the morning—an hour when the bottle-blowers in Salamander Street are often astir to begin their work. This may account for W——n's subsequent statement, that when he passed the cones, a loud shout saluted his ears, a circumstance that frightened him more than his original pursuers. He admitted, too, that such was his agitation in this extraordinary flight, that he never thought of the shirt, which was so sure, as a white object on the sands, to be picked up by the individuals from Baltic Street, who, he was satisfied, had followed him only a short way, and would return.

When he stopped at the Figgate Whins, the act was the result of utter exhaustion ; but, seating himself on one of the boulders common on the beach there, he contrived to get himself again clothed. This process he got through as hurriedly as his *shivering* limbs and benumbed fingers would admit,

and being considerably enough under the apprehension that some one of those who had seen him would come up and surprise him, he made for the road between Leith and Portobello—yet still unresolved as to what refuge he would betake himself to. The abatement of his terror allowed of something like forecast, and it occurred that he might venture back, by the road, to Leith, and ascertain whether it was not now too late to get hold of his shirt, which might probably not have been noticed by his pursuers. The resolution had something of his natural foolhardiness in it, but there was also calculation—a quality in which his proficiency had been tested by escapes where his companions had been caught in the meshes of the criminal law. Looking carefully about, and seeing no one, he commenced his return, and never halted till he was again in Baltic Street, where it behoved him to be more cautious. Yet there was no need, for no one was astir, and he held down to the beach, where the receding tide gave him hopes that he would find the linen. He hastened to the spot. The shirt was gone—and he shuddered as he recollected that his name, by the careful hands of a kind and loving mother, was written in printing ink on the side gusset.

The circumstance I have now mentioned, scared him from Leith, a direction he had first taken with the intention of getting on board a vessel for America, but there was an additional reason why




he should retrace his flight eastwards. The flash of recollection as to his name being on the shirt was followed by putting his hand into his pocket to ascertain if the gully was there. It had fallen out, probably in his flight; at least he could not find it at the place where he had deposited his clothes. This alarmed him still more, in consequence of his having, like other youths, had a fancy for carving his name on the heft. The shirt and the knife together, found on the sands, would settle any question regarding the author of the murder. Under these considerations, he resolved upon walking back on the sands, and trying to find the lost instrument. He made the attempt, but in vain: he could not find it, and now what was he to do? Whither go? All the money he had was the single penny got from Kemp, and he had no means of getting more. Wherever he fled he must beg to be able to exist, and his supplications would expose him to detection. He resolved, at length, to go forward to Musselburgh, where he had an uncle, whom he thought he could trust, and he accordingly hurried on in that direction, so as to arrive as early as possible, that he might skulk in the meantime, and until Mr Gilmour, his mother's brother, who was a late riser, was up. It was a long and painful effort for him—unslept, exhausted, and torn by apprehension and remorse as he was—but he arrived before five. The night had been beautiful, and the morning promised to

break in sunshine, for the sky was clear of clouds, and the winds hushed to a silence, which inspired awe, as an element to mix with his tumultuous emotions. Reaching the Links, he got into a hollow among bushes of whins and brooms, and there lying down, he fell fast asleep.

When he opened his eyes the sun was far above the horizon—it was well on to nine o'clock. He had overslept his intention, and shuddered when he awoke to his dark recollections, in the face of a smiling day. What would he now have given to be allowed to suffer that thong, the terror of which had been the cause of all his misery, on the condition of being free from these terrible thoughts! The very form of a man in the distance, as he cast his eye round, was to him a spectre, yet he could not get to his uncle's house but through a part of the High Street, and how to accomplish that cost him many thoughts. His resolution was taxed, and he girded himself up. On he went, and reached the east end of the town, which he had no sooner entered, than he found the windows drawn up, and protruded heads, and doors filled with women, and here and there knots of wiseacre-looking men, all listening to a speech-crying stentor, bawling out, at the top of his lungs, the intelligence of a horrible and bloody murder committed on the person of a bank porter, of the name of Begbie, who had been barbarously stabbed with a knife on the previous night, in one of the very

darkest closes in Edinburgh—every word of which went home to his heart as resolutely and effectually as the blade of his gully did into that of his unknown victim. He shrunk into himself, and would have fled from the gaze of the people, who, no doubt, were looking at him. And it was a man Begbie whom he had murdered! How strange—never such a thought entered his mind, though we may indulge in the wonder—how strange that these people of Musselburgh should have known the name of his victim before him! that they should have known even that a man had been killed, while he who did the ruthless deed was ignorant of it! Oh that the streets of Musselburgh, which resounded to the cries of that cycloborus, would swallow him up! But he dared not fly, they would pursue him—he could not go back, it would create suspicion—he must get refuge, for his heart was weary of that terrible beating, and his legs trembled, as if they would no longer support him—and his tongue would not utter “Not guilty” if any of those people should seize him on the instant, and drag him to justice. Did his mother, whose image, in all these scenes, had flitted about, restless and fitful, and casting dear but sorrowful looks at him, hear the words cried by that man—from the wide mouth of the more experienced vendors of the horrible in Edinburgh? How the thoughts came and went, glanced and burned, and darted away, and came,



and mixed, and swirled in circles through his brain. Yet he held on—he came to his uncle's door.

The servant opened, with a face occupied by the old welcome smile to Bill.

“But, gude Lord! what's the matter wi' ye?” she said, as she looked wildly into his face. “The laddie's a' covered wi' bluid. Here, maister, look here.”

“What is the meaning of all this?” said the uncle, as he came from his breakfast parlour, with his mouth half-filled with toast. “What is the matter with you, man? why are you here at this hour, in this state? Whose blood is that on your face?—your own, or one of your father's calves, or that man Begbie's, who was killed last night?”

“Let me in, let me in,” cried Bill, as he rushed past his interrogator, and got into the parlour, where he threw himself upon a chair.

“And you've nothing to say?” inquired again his uncle, as he followed anxiously. “Barbara, bring water and a towel—we will clear him of the blood at any rate.”

And Barbara was presently occupied in loosening his neckcloth.

“And a' down the vest—Mercy save us! And whaur's the callant's sark?”

“Has he no shirt on, woman?” said Mr Gil-mour, as he stood gazing and wondering.

“The never an inch mair than he had that mornin' when his mither bore him.”

"Speak, man ; what is the meaning of all this ?" said Mr Gilmour.

The lad was silent, while Barbara, with a wet end of a towel, was busy rubbing at his face.

"No answer ?"

"I winna, I canna, I daurna," was the reply.

"More wonderful still !" exclaimed the uncle, in great anxiety and apprehension.

"Has your father struck you ?"

"No."

"Have you cut yourself ?"

"No."

"Have you been fighting ?"

"No."

"Have you been in the killing-house ?"

"No."

"And you cannot tell where your shirt is ?"

"No."

"The lad's frightened," said the woman, sympathetically.

"Not he," replied the master. "There's something wrong. Bring me my hat and my stick. I'll go in to Gabriel."

The servant flustered as she obeyed, and Mr Gilmour, beckoning her to the door, said—

"Take care, and keep him in till I return. He was always a wild boy, and I fear there is something serious. I will be back to dinner."

"It's that street harangue that frightens me," she replied ; "and yet a body could hardly think *he* could do that."

"Out of the question," said he, as he departed ;  
 "but still there's something that troubles me.  
 He's my sister's son."

And, leaving the house, the uncle went direct to the inn from whence the stage started, took his seat, and reached Edinburgh, making thereupon directly to the Canongate.

"Oh, I'm so glad you are come," said Mrs W——n, as she opened the door to him. "Have you heard anything of Bill? We have two policemen in the house, and I am distracted."

"Be calm," said he, as he went into the parlour, where the men were sitting. He took a chair, and was silent, till he should learn more. Meanwhile, the father himself entered, and seated himself, in wonder at all these strange doings.

"Has your son been with you all night?" said the detective, a shrewd man, and among the first who had a name, in Edinburgh, in his peculiar department.

"No," replied Mrs W——n. "I will tell the truth, however sore to a mother's heart."

"Has he been in the habit of being absent at night?"

"He never was before, since he was born."

"Have you any reason for supposing why he has been absent?"

"Why," replied the butcher, "the boy is a little wild, but, upon the whole, good-hearted and generous. He thrashed the son of Mr Hunter of Lothian Hut; and, because he understood there

was something waiting at home, he told a companion that he was afraid to return."

"Was the boy Hunter cut, so as to bleed?"

"Not at all—it was what they call a dry thrashing—not even a bloody nose."

"Does he ever go among your shambles?"

"Too fond of it."

"But was he known to be there yesterday?"

"It was not a killing-day, and the door was not even opened."

"Have you any of his shirts?"

At this question Mr Gilmour looked more grave.

"Ay," replied the wife. "He has a dozen, all spun by me—and cut and sewed by me: he has been well cared for—he is my only child."

"Let me see one of them."

Mrs W——n went to a drawer, and brought forth an example of her handiwork—a snow-white linen shirt.

"This does you credit, Mrs W——n," said the officer, as he unfolded the shirt, and carefully examined that part where the name is generally, in the practice of Scottish housewives, marked. "I see his name upon it, and the figure 6."

"Ay, sir. We used to sew these marks, but the new ink is better, and saves time."

The officer put his hand into his wide side-pocket, drew out a bundle, took from off it a piece of brown paper, and began to unroll a blood-stained shirt.

Without uttering a word, the mother fixed her eye on the object so well known to her, stretched forth her hand, firm and unshaking, examined it, and looked at the mark.

"That is Bill's shirt," she said. "He got it from me, out of the fold, yesterday morning."

"Let me see it," said the uncle, as he took it into his hands, and examined carefully the breast, and especially the back, a great part of which had been literally drenched with blood—now dry and glistening.

The officer was meanwhile watching the parties. He was a detective, and thought it a merit to be ingenious. Looking to the butcher—

"Is that the blood of a beast or a human creature?"

"That I cannot answer," replied he. "I never could find any difference."

Mr Gilmour having finished his examination, returned the shirt to the officer.

"How can you account," said he, "for the blood on the back, as if it had run down his neck?"

The officer was puzzled.

"The blow given Begbie," he replied—"I cast no charge anywhere—but the thrust by which Begbie was killed, ran right into the heart; and we have only to suppose the murderer to have been stooping a little, to account for such a circumstance as you have mentioned. The blood, the doctor says, would spurt out in a sudden gush."



He then proceeded to roll up the shirt, with all the care of a laundress, and having deposited it in his pocket, he next drew out, from a pocket on the other side, a second brown-paper packet, unrolled it, and held up a knife.

"Do you know that instrument?" he said to the father. "Do not rub it. There are blotches of blood on the white handle."

"Too well," was the reply; "my son's name is on it."

The mother's white lip quivered, but she said nothing, as her eye sought the well-known instrument.

"Could you tell me where these things were got?" inquired the father.

"On Leith Sands," replied the officer.

Mr Gilmour hereupon rose from his seat, slipped out, and running across the street, entered the shop, where he found Joe White, a confidential servant of the butcher's—very fond of Bill, and a trustworthy fellow.

"Joe," said he, "there's something wrong with your friend Bill. Take your master's pony, and ride, as quick as Rory's breath will enable him to hold out, down to my house. See Barbara, and whisper in her ear, to take Bill west, to her brother William's house in Fisherrow, and get him concealed there."

The alarmed Joe was off on the instant, and Mr Gilmour, on recrossing the street, met the officers coming out of the house.

"You 're the young man's uncle?" said he who had been spokesman.

"Yes, the mother's brother."

"Your name?"

"Gilmour."

"Where do you reside?"

"In the High Street of Musselburgh."

At that moment Joe emerged from the close where the stable was, leading the pony, which must have been ready for some other service, and he had no sooner mounted than the detective laid hold of the bridle.

"Where for, my lad?"

"To the Marquis's park, at Portobello, for a dozen o' gimmers."

"Well, go on, but don't break the pony's wind."

Then turning round, as Joe departed in no seeming hurry, he whispered some words in the ear of the other officer, who immediately set off up the High Street.

Mr Gilmour was satisfied of two things—first, that the officer was despatched for a horse, to go and search his house; and secondly, that Joe would long before have that house ready for his visit. On getting again into the parlour, he found the father and mother sitting silent, looking into each other's faces, and, apparently, unable to make a single comment on the extraordinary scene they had witnessed. The uncle resumed his chair.

"Bill came to me this morning," he said, "all covered with blood, and without his shirt. His shoes were covered with sand, soaked with wet, as if he had been upon the sea-shore."

"What did he say?" inquired the mother.

"He would say nothing, or rather, he did say something, that is not calculated to comfort us. When asked why his shirt was amissing, he replied, 'I winna, I canna, I daurna tell.'"

"This looks worst of all," said the father.

The mother made no remark, but sat still, and, as it would almost have seemed, composed. The speech-criers had been down the Canongate early in the morning, and now a second couple, one on each side, were busy making the precincts ring with their ominous bawl. It is well known with what avidity the servants purchase these distorted and often disgusting accounts, which are generally drawn up by low blackguards, connected with some equally low printer. On this occasion, Mrs W——n's servant had been out making a purchase, and, no doubt, considering that her mistress would be highly gratified by a perusal of the bill, she opened the parlour door, and coming up to her, put the long bit of coarse paper into her hands. Her mistress did not reject it. She held the paper in her hand, and, without apparently paying heed to it, she said to her brother—

"I suffered much in bearing this boy—I have suffered much in rearing him—and I suffer much

this day; but my heart tells me that he did not commit this crime."

Both the men shook their heads, and as she looked at them, she was meditative—probably calling up mental resources—and all the while crumpling up, unwittingly, the paper, until she had it rolled up in a ball, within her nervously closed hand.

"Let me read the paper," said Mr Gilmour.

She handed it to him, and he proceeded to undo it—a work of some difficulty, for although it had only been for a few minutes in her hand, it was wet and glued with perspiration.

"Let me see," continued the uncle, as he tried to decipher the words. "This murder is that of the British Linen Company's porter, a man called Begbie."

He had just got so far, when a rap at the door claimed attention. The servant entered and put a letter into the hands of Mr Gilmour, saying that the bearer waited an answer. The letter was opened, and glanced over with an anxious eye. "It is from Barbara," he said. "She writes," (reading,) "'Bill has terrified me. He hasna opened his mouth, either to eat or speak, since you left. Having work to do in the kitchen, I left him, for a little, to himsel'; but, hearing some noise, I hurried to the parlour—and what think ye? The callant had the parrot's cage off the end o' the rope—the rope doubled to make it

stronger, a kinch cast upon it—and, actually, the daft laddie was standing on a chair wi' his head in the noose, ready to throw himself aff, when I fortunately entered and saved him. He was just hovering to throw himsel' into eternity. Haud hame; I kenna what to do wi' him; but this I ken, that he has dune some awfu' deed; and, just to be plain, I fear it's that very business they've been roaring a' day in the streets o' Musselburgh about.'

"Why, I like that least of any thing I have yet heard," continued the uncle; "not that I think a boy will hang himself sooner than an old man, with the experience of the hollowness and vain ways of the world, but that, from my knowledge of him, he's the very last stripling I could have supposed to attempt his own life for a small misdeed. His fights have, as we all know, been endless, and his orchard-robbing, and wild larking, of every kind, been beyond parallel, and it would not be consistent with our notions of the nature of men or boys, that he would betake himself to suicide for any cause—I am sorry to say—less than murder itself. I am the more inclined to speak out, that I see you, my sister, led by the blind yearning of a mother's love, attempting to beguile yourself into a notion of his innocence. We must not indulge in these thoughts too early, at any rate, because, for the honour of the Gilmours, a family unstained by crime, it is necessary

that one carrying their blood should not be hanged in Edinburgh. Meantime, we must keep him out of the authorities' hands, as well as his own."

"What is to be done with him, then?" said the father.

"I may now tell you," continued Mr Gilmour, "that while the officers were with you, I slipt out, for the purpose of despatching Joe to my house, with instructions to Barbara to get him off to her brother's. I suspect, however, the officer will be very soon after him, and my hope is, that Joe's great tact may enable him to baffle the policeman."

"If I had my choice in this unfortunate affair," said the mother, "I would bring my boy to Edinburgh, to face the law, which is always just. It will soon be known over this broad city, that Bill W——n has fled for the murder of this man Begbie, and we all know how soon flight changes suspicion into a dead certainty. Thinkna me harsh and unmotherly. Heaven knows what love I feel for that boy; yea, strange as it may be, for it is in God's unknown ends, I have loved him while I have mourned for him, the more that he has been rebellious against my advice—his very wildness to others rendering his affection for me something like as if he made me an exception to all the world. But, if you will not consent to see him proved innocent, let me meet him by ourselves. If there's a creature on earth he will open his mind to, it is his mother."

morning, and the hope of her lips was belied by the pallor of a countenance, sweet and gentle as were her thoughts. The servant was out on a message; there was no one to stop her; she sought her bedroom, and taking up a cloak, threw it over her, hurried on her bonnet, and left the house.

Getting to the bottom of the stair, she had the first intimation of the kind of night she was to encounter, in a gust of hard hail in her face. The ground was beginning to be white, and the wind had risen to a shrill whistling through the long closes. She hardly observed these things—Bill was the sole object of her thoughts. She turned down the Canongate, never asking—for as yet she felt no weakness, though she had been confined to the house for a month previously—how her limbs were to carry her. She came to the Palace, passed its south end, got into the Duke's Walk. All the time the drift of snow and hail had been increasing; still she observed nothing of it, excepting occasionally when her slender frame gave way to the force of the wind, and she swerved and staggered to regain her path again on the coming lull. It was not until she had struggled on to a part of the Walk opposite the Hunter's Bog, down which the wind blew much more strongly than elsewhere, that her attention was claimed by the weakness of her limbs—when, indeed, her inability to withstand the impulse of the cold blast, was proved to her by the necessity of saving herself from being

overturned by leaning her body on one of the trees which lined the Walk. But what is wind or hail, what lightnings or raining fires, to the yearnings of a mother's heart? Yes, but though these yearnings are infinite, nor yet to be stilled by even disobedience and crime, they are limited in their power over bodily functions. She would feel this by and by: she did not feel it yet. By the time she reached the exit from the park, at Parson's Green gate, the snow had increased considerably; and though not to an extent to be much of an obstacle to strong and healthy travellers, more than enough, when coming on the wings of a strong blast, for her to contend with during any protracted time. What differences may exist amidst assimilated aspects and appearances! That weak and doating woman passed, with limbs that quivered and a body that swerved, strong, muscular men and hardy women. There was no Bill at the end of *their* journey—wild and reckless, and even cruel to all the world besides—to lay his head upon their breast, and groan out the agony of his remorse; to look in their face with eyes of love, perhaps to whisper proofs of his innocence. These thoughts were the opposing forces presented to the harsh features of the night. She passed Jock's Lodge, took the Fishwives' Causeway, and still wrestled with the gusts, still defied the snow—all with an energy forced from, or, if accorded by physical springs, upon conditions of nature's own



choice. By the time she passed Portobello, these conditions began visibly to be enforced. It was cruel; but is not nature cruel when she is called to resent an infringement of her normal laws? Her limbs began to shake even visibly, her head became giddy, a film seemed to gather over her eyes. She leant against a dyke, but for which she would have fallen. She was still conscious; the attack was not the prelude to one of her ordinary faints—the reaction, in that form, had not come yet, for the yearning indicated itself amidst the decaying powers. She recovered a little, but only a little; and now her progress was not what it was. The swerving had given place to slowness, and she dragged her limbs, rather than being carried forward by them.

It was not to be expected that this unequal contest could last a half hour more, yet that time would take her to Bill. "Oh," she thought, "if that boy only knew where I am, under what difficulties striving, under what agonies crucified, under what hopes inspired, his bloody hand would be soft as thistle-down, his wild eye as meek as the dove's, his tumultuous, revengeful heart thrilled with a son's affection." This was not to be; and even as the thoughts careered through her brain, the energies died and died away apace. When about half-way between Portobello and Fisherrow, she fell amidst the snow, now several inches deep, and though fully conscious and warm with aspirations, she could not summon strength even to rise

and stand. The spot where she fell was close by a hedge, to which she had turned for support as her powers left her; and this was also one of the misfortunes of her journey, for the people passing and repassing on the opposite footpath, blinded as they were with the flakes of snow, never turned their heads in the direction where she lay. How long she lay there will appear when we say that about half-past eight Mr W——n was told by his servant, that her mistress had gone out about seven, and had not returned. On receiving this intelligence, he instinctively went to the shop door, looked out, and observed the character of the night. He said nothing to the servant, only observing she might go home, but his thoughts were busy. It is only the experience of a life that can enable us to understand a human being, and to calculate the probability of actions in given circumstances. Nor is the conclusion anything like a process of reasoning, it is a sudden conviction derived from a chain of reminiscences, rising like a line of electric lights, and retraced by the judgment with a rapidity shaming our distributions of time. He knew in a moment she had gone for Fisherrow, and leaving Joe to shut up the shop, he hurried home, threw on a greatcoat, and in two minutes more was on the way to Musselburgh. A rough, though honest man, he was, in temperament, the very opposite of his wife. He could thrash Bill, and love him well enough; he could correct his wife,

and fondle her as a good husband ought; but a stranger to enthusiasm, and its images of delight and pain, he could not read the records of man's genius, as recorded in the poetical actions of life: as for the weather, he viewed all meteorological beauties as pleasant playthings, and their aggressions in the form of hail or wind as the caperings and escapades of a heifer, which he could silence with the blow of his killing-axe. So on he went, yet not without thoughts and feelings which, if described to him in set rhetoric, he would have despised. He knew his wife's weakness, and his eye, as it surveyed the side parts of the road, shewed that he suspected the very fate under which at that moment she was suffering. An hour and a quarter had passed, and he drew near the term of her journey of love. He was surprised that she had got so far on, and began to hope she had reached her destination, when, all at once, he came upon her, as she lay still and motionless among the snow. The sensitive touches of even stolidity are pleasant to us in proportion as they recede in their demonstrations from the poetic spasms of over-refined sensibility. We always hanker after nature in her natural conditions. The rough heart melted; the stern, resistive eye was filled, the hand that slew shook as he took hers, stiff and cold, and pressed it.

"Mary!" he cried. "God! is this the end of our long life of affection! Speak, look up."

"Is that you, Gabriel?"

"The same," he answered. "And you are here for that cursed"——

"Say not a word against him. Help me, I am dying. But, Gabriel, tell me if, for one moment, I could see Bill."

"You shall," replied he, as he lifted the light burden into his arms, clutching her, and feeling her cold body all over, and kissing her stiff frozen lips. "You shall."

And he hurried along, estimating her weight as nothing. He felt as if he could, with nerves raised by affection to the strength of a Titan, carry her miles, over rivers and mountains, to a place of refuge. Nor did he slacken his pace till he reached Mr Gilmour's door. The rap of his foot brought Barbara on the instant, and one more sufficed to bring him into the comfortable parlour, where a fire burned with a gleam in which his eye leapt. A few words sufficed for information and explanation. A bed was warmed, and Mrs W—— placed in it, hot drinks prepared, and gentle soothing words whispered to wile the spirit again into hope.

Neither her husband nor her brother felt any apprehension tending to disquiet them in regard to the ultimate fate of this fond mother. They looked simply to the effects of the exposure to cold, and thought that the return of heat to the body, and the application of cordials, would bring her round to her ordinary health. The doctor, next day, felt himself called upon to disabuse them of this

fond theory. He was soon made aware of the circumstances which led to her journey, and saw, from the condition of his patient, that a moral ill, deep sunk into her heart, had paralysed the fountain of life, and the superinduction of the cold acted in a manner which defied all prognosis. Every hour, after she went to bed, added to her depression, and at length she was pronounced almost hopeless. Meanwhile, her thoughts were still directed to her boy, who had been the cause of all. She called for him, and as often declared him innocent; but it was thought unsafe to bring him before her, though if her husband had been made acquainted with the danger into which she was likely to be precipitated, he would have run all risks to gratify her in her one great heartfelt desire.

More than once, during her illness, Mr Gilmour went at midnight to William Temple's, and saw his charge. He tried every means to get him to divulge his secret—even told him he would make him his heir to all his property, provided he was innocent; but the same silence and sullenness repaid his pains. The mention of his mother's illness startled him, and seemed half to resolve his stern determination. He threw a wild look at the uncle, placed his hand upon his face and sobbed bitterly. The only tender chord in his entire mental constitution was touched, but the response terrified him rather than softened him, and still he resisted questions. After Mr Gilmour went away, de-

jected, spiritless, the boy became, from hour to hour, more restless, and seemed to be shaken in his resolution not to divulge. Every hour he questioned Temple if he knew how his mother was; and when, at length, he was told she was dangerous, he fell upon the floor in a fit of agony—yet, even in this worst hour of his suffering, he would not yield to Temple's solicitation that he should tell the truth. It seemed, indeed, that from the hour he heard cried the murder of Begbie, all doubt left him as to his being the individual that perpetrated it, and the thought that his mother should look upon him as a murderer, closed up the issues of confession.

Some new light had, in the meantime, come to the authorities as to the particular case of Begbie, though the evidence against Bill amounted to something like proof of some crime of equal enormity. Even from the beginning, they had ascertained that the knife by which Begbie was killed was left sticking under the fifth rib. The man had been an adept in his trade; he knew the exact place where to hit, struck with decision, and not only left the knife to prevent effusion of blood, but the round piece of pasteboard which, fixed on the handle, was intended to prevent what blood came from reaching his hand. He was seen last to issue from the close with the bank bag in his hand; and his appearance, as described, by no means agreed with that of a boy. But still there

was the mystery to clear up as to the shirt found on Leith Sands, the knife, and the flight of Bill—a mystery which threatened to baffle the authorities; and though they suspected that two murders had been committed that night, they could discover no trace of one of the missing victims.

On the morning of the fourth day after Mrs W——n's seizure, a change for the better became apparent, and Mr Gilmour was almost resolved—especially as he could discover no spies hanging about—to confirm the auspices of returning health, by secretly introducing Bill, at midnight, into the sick-chamber. But then there was the determination of the boy not to see the mother, first to be overcome; and next, the consequences that might result from the interview might have the effect of throwing the mother back—nay, she might, by the wonderful power she exercised over his affections, have wiled from him his crime, in details even more hideous than their worst construction had yet presented it to her. It was in the hour of this uncertainty, entertained both by the husband and the uncle, that Joe White was seen approaching the door, with an inflamed eye and other tokens of excitement. There was a woman with him.

“What now?” said Mr Gilmour, as he saw from the window. “Another surprise. I tremble for his first words.”

“Joe is blythe,” said the flesher. “No common event could move that face in such a way.”

Joe actually tumbled into the room, dragging with him Jenny Morison.

"Here's a woman wha kens the hail story," he shouted; "it's a' up noo, and Bill is innocent. I kent the laddie couldna kill a human creature nae mair than mysel', though never man knocked doun a heifer wi' mair pleasure."

"Peace!" said Mr Gilmour. "Who are you?" addressing the woman—"but stay, have you good or ill news for us?"

"Oh, gude, gude—or maybe I wadna be here; I dinna like to carry ill tidings."

"Then come with me," he continued; and, followed by Mr W——n, he led Jenny into the bedroom quietly, and set her on a chair. Barbara was in the room, and Mr Gilmour whispered in her ear, to tell her patient that a woman had come with good news from Edinburgh.

"Ye're a' mad!" said Barbara, with bated breath, but fierce gesticulation, as she stood before the curtains. "Awa', awa';" and taking the woman Jenny by the arm, she led her out. And, "Awa' you too," she added, as she pushed her master out. "She is in a turning sleep; and wauken her, either to joy or sorrow, and ye've an equal chance o' killing her. What fules men are in a sick-room!"

And Barbara was right. Jenny was taken into the parlour; and there having got her mouth oiled with a glass of brandy, though already bursting



to speak, she recounted all the circumstances of that night when Bill slept in her cellar; how she went in on the morning and found him gone—how she wondered at the bed soaked with blood—how she flew up to the Mortimers above, and told them that a callant had cut his throat in her room, and then ran away to die somewhere else—how the Mortimers laughed as she spoke, and how she cursed them for unfeeling wretches, till she saw on the floor a dead sheep, lying in its own blood, which was sipping through between the planks.

“Ay, sirs,” she added, “the Mortimers are sheep-stealers; and when they saw that I had discovered them, they winket, and gave me a dram to bribe me no to tell that the callant had stuck the puir beast wi’ a knife driven up into its body.”

“A sheep!” ejaculated Mr Gilmour.

“A sheep!” responded the flesher.

“Ay, a sheep,” roared Joe; “and what’s mair, ane o’ our ain gimmers that I brought in frae Prestonfield the very day before. Do ye no mind o’ the pen being robbed o’ three that night Bill disappeared?”

“Yes,” replied the butcher; “and we suspected the Mortimers as old hands.”

Jenny, with a pound put into her hands by Mr Gilmour, and relieved of her secret, departed, happier than she had been for many a day. Joe followed her to overtake her, and keep her out of the public-houses by the way. Some time after-

wards, and towards the afternoon, Barbara whispered into the ear of her patient, that news had come from Edinburgh that Bill was innocent. The eye of the mother lighted as if by a sudden gleam, then became suffused with tears; sobs relieved the charged heart, and mutterings of prayer moved the white lips. Further on in the evening she was deemed fit for the recital, and Bill was sent for. The story was recounted by Mr Gilmour, at the bedside of the patient, and corroborated in every circumstance by Bill himself, who, clasped in the arms of the fond mother, wept and sobbed, and promised to amend his ways and be good.

"And a' this," said Barbara, holding up her hands, "has been aboot the killing o' a sheep!"

## The Scored Back.

---

THE activity of our literature, stimulated as it is by the desire of novelty, is not, I suspect, equal to the rapid occurrence of the crowding events of a highly civilised age. Even the newspapers, continually upon the hunt for new supplies of the wonderful, fall short of a complete search; and when an event is a week old, it becomes stale to the relish of the regular news-hunter, and is left either to oblivion, or to the resuscitation of the morbid novelist. The strange incident I have to record, under this title, was related to me by the late Colonel W——n of the 93rd Regiment, who was personally connected with it, having been an officer of the 4th Regiment at the time it occurred.

The regiment had returned from the West Indies, and having been recruited after the decimation inflicted on it by yellow fever, was quartered near L——. Many of the men were sickly and in the hospital, and some able for duty were only convalescent. It was upon this account that a station was assigned to the regiment airy and healthy, with suitable grounds for recreation. In

particular, there was a long avenue, or rather loan, as we call it in Scotland, leading from the quarters to the town. A row of large elm trees ran along either side, so wide-spreading and umbrageous, that the branches in some places nearly met, but leaving below a sufficiency of space, as well as regards breadth and height, for the march of the companies, as they passed to the town or from it. At the distance of about two-thirds of the extreme length of the walk from the barrack quadrangle, there was placed a sentry, whose duty it was to give and take the word during the night; and at this point so straight was the line of the entire avenue up towards the top, that the soldier on guard could in clear nights see, under the trees, the east side of the building. It may be stated, also, that the shady walk was much sought after by the inhabitants, who resorted to it at all times of the day, but utterly forsaken after nightfall, in compliance with the military regulations.

Taking this view of the place along with us, it will enable us to appreciate the full import of a circumstance which occurred on a morning of September, when the picquet came to relieve the night-sentry. The man, whose name was Cameron, had assumed a grave look, so unlike his usual cheerfulness, that the sergeant asked him if he was well, for he had been, like many others, on the sick-list not long before. But Cameron was in no hurry to answer—seemed to be under some


fear, and took his place in the returning picquet without satisfying the questioner. Unimportant as the incident seemed, it did not pass the observation of his comrades, who, when they had regained their quarters, immediately questioned him again as to the cause of his gravity; but what was their surprise when they discovered that the sympathy they were ready to accord to his supposed illness, was claimed by the impression on his mind that he had seen a ghost! The consequence was the ordinary one—a laugh. But the brusquerie of the English soldier is not greater than his ignorance; and we are not without proof that the courage which is undismayed in the face of the forlorn hope, will quail at the recital of a story where a ghost, if not a fighting one, is the hero.

“You may laugh,” said Cameron, solemnly, “but I can *swear*.”

And then there was that eagerness for details, so common in minds instructed only through the ear.

“Let’s hear all about it, Cameron,” said the sergeant. “Men, be silent.”

“Why,” said Cameron, “when I had got over the early part of my watch, which might be near to one in the morning, I stood looking up the avenue towards our quarters, and was wondering, from a light I saw in the colonel’s room, why the officers were so late. It was not what I could call bright moonlight; there were clouds in the sky, and the



night was gusty, raw, and disagreeable; yet occasionally the moon came out, and even when she didn't I could see full way up the walk. As I kept looking in that direction, something caught my eye, but so dim looking was it, that I took it for a trail of mist, yet somehow or other I could not keep my eyes off it; and as I stood gazing, I saw it get more distinct every moment, till, by and by, as it approached, I could make out a figure running in great haste. I had scarcely time to cry out, 'Who goes?' when it was almost close upon me, still running, and paying no heed to my shout; and before I could cry again, it flew past the box, at the very moment when the moon came out again, so that I had a clear, distinct view. My first thought was, that it was some wild comrade out in his shirt, but that thought did not satisfy me, for the figure had a white covering on his head, was wrapped in pure linen—and that was no whiter than the legs which, as it strode along, I saw just as clearly as I see you. I was not frightened on the instant so much as afterwards; and I only hope it is no forewarning of my mother's death, for I got word yesterday that she is not expected to live."

Ghost or no ghost, Cameron was not a man to fabricate a story. He was honest, and rather blunt, and the men respected him; but his communication, though made by one less trusted, was calculated to raise curiosity at least, and the

consequence soon appeared in the spread of the night's adventure all over the quarters. Even the colonel and officers heard it, not with any belief in the apparition, but still not with indifference, as in all likelihood connected with some breach of discipline, which they were bound to watch. It need hardly be said that the curiosity was partly also concerned with the question, whether the next sentry would be visited in the same way; for in all such cases of visions, reported as occurring at particular places and times, the mind naturally turns to an expected repetition of the melo-dramatic affair. It would appear again—Cameron was not the man to be mistaken. It would not come again—Cameron had been deceived. But no one was under any suspicion that there was an attempt at deception. The question was a canteen affair; drink inflamed the opposing parties into a mock heroic enthusiasm, and all, but he who was to take the box on the walk that night, extracted from the mystery and the conflict something that, at least, checquered the monotonous routine of a soldier's life. Among the wives, too—a peculiar set, far apart from their sex in the streets and alleys in town, and to whom a bit of romance is congenial, as being, in their way, a kind of small heroines—Cameron's story was a fund that might serve them for gossip till they "got the route," or received a glimpse of the chance of war.

Yet surely it might all end in nothing, and by

the time that the next man took his station at the same spot, the enthusiasm had probably rather undergone diminution, from the mere fatality of burning out. The man himself, a stout Englishman, called Ned Neville, from the wrestling county of Exeter, was clearly not very much at his ease, but he had a boisterous manner of making light of dangers which he would rather shun ; and it was believed that if he was fairly tried, he would be found even ridiculously awanting. There are men in the world, and there were men in the 4th Regiment, to whom the talk and bluster of the day would have imparted a resolution—in the event of an opportunity—to put the affair to the severe test of a direct bodily appeal to the midnight mystery ; but there are others, and were no doubt others among the ranks, brave perhaps in other respects as they might be, to whom the excitement, and in some cases fear, would be only as the cause of a depression predisposed to be deepened. Between the two Ned stood midway ; he would not be resolute, and he would rather not be cowardly if he could, and therefore no one could divine the character of his manifestations in the morning. The morning came, and the recollections of the previous day produced that amount of curiosity in the relieving picquet, which was nothing less than natural. But what was again the surprise of his comrades, when they found the man in a condition which not only defied their laughter, but claimed



their sympathy ! They found him still able to keep his legs : but if he had wanted to describe what he had seen, in even spasmodic heroics, he could not have accomplished his object better than by merely presenting to their astonished gaze, a face from which all its prior mantling blood had fled ; teeth that had been chattering for hours, and would not be quieted ; shaky hands, scarcely able to hold his musket ; and eyes, not “ in a wild frenzy rolling,” but beyond that—sunk and motionless, as if he had “ looked out ” their natural energies, and fallen into a collapse of the brain, and the optic nerve as a pertinent of it. He was got into the rank, and marched up without a question, for the sergeant repressed a curiosity which was too strong in the men for the discipline of soldiers on duty. The suspense of the comrades was, however, short. He was conducted to his quarters, and there, after having been allowed a glass of spirits, he was able to recount a story, the same in substance as that reported by Cameron, but so distorted by his fears, that it assumed the aspect of being, in all respects, overcharged by his fancy, and bordering on the ridiculous.

But however exaggerated the speech and motives of the man, the effect was the real and natural result of a fear acting upon a mind not naturally resolute and predisposed by expectations. Those who heard his story told, through grimace, trembling, and jabbering, were perhaps more influenced

by it than they would have been by a grave and connected communication like that of Cameron's. "Neville has seen the ghost," was the watchword of the entire quarters; and something like consternation, acting through sympathy, threatened to prevent the men from attending to the duties of their discipline. It was no longer a dubious question in another quarter,—among the men's wives, every one of whom feared for her husband's turn, and was ready to set him up against obedience, in the event of his being called to the unenvied post.

The officers, on the other hand, and at the head of them the sensible Colonel W——gh, still sceptical and suspicious that there was some stratagem or "lark" among the men, could not afford to hold out in their indifference, where a whole regiment was in a state approaching to a panic. They set about a regular examination of both Cameron and Neville, and finding their reports agree in all essential particulars, made every inquiry to ascertain whether any of the men were out of bed during the night. The inquiry was fruitless, and their only remedy seemed to be to take care in the choice of a proper person for the evening's watch—fully determined to apply the "cat" in the event of a discovery of the culprit.

"W——h," said the colonel to the oldest lieutenant, "I wish you to take charge of this piece of roguery. Seek out a man you can trust, and let us see what he will make of it."

The lieutenant, who seemed to take an intense interest in the affair, immediately sent for a man of the name of Ross, who, in obedience to the summons, was soon standing before his officer. Now, George Ross was not in appearance much of a warrior: he was thin and wiry, with sharp lines running through his face—an index which indicated nothing but inflexibility—as if every one of these sharp lines had been graven with a chisel on marble, and would go neither to the right nor to the left for any moving feeling inside, whether grief, or fear, or laughter, or aught else. He had only one idea, and that was to obey; nor did he care for any reason assignable for his duty more than he did for the tickle of a straw—if we may except a command to kill his colonel, captain, or lieutenant.

“George,” said W——b, “you have heard of this story which is running through the regiment, and incapacitating the men for their duty?”

“Yes, sir; all nonsense.”

“Well, I have chosen you to take the box in the walk to-night, and if the said ghost come in your way, to call it to account, and report to me in the morning.”

“Yes, sir.”

And George touched his hat, wheeled about, and departed.

“The devil’s in the white sheet,” said the lieutenant to himself, as he looked after the man, “if that fellow don’t undress him.”

Meanwhile, the strolling soldiers had carried the intelligence to the town, and as the lump of society is so easily leavened, the story spread, getting additional members in its progress—as some insects, they say, become developed in their flight. A woman of the town, who was amissing, had been taken into the barracks and privately murdered, yet not so very privately as that it did not become known that her body, with nothing on it but her shift, was buried behind the canteen, in a small garden between it and a footpath running up from the lower end of the shaded avenue, and communicating with the barrack quadrangle at the back or north side—a path much frequented by love parties, and consequently by the soldiers. Such deeds if unavenged by man, behoved, from the mere undying character of sublunar justice, to be revealed by Heaven, and suitably disposed of—a process in which the spirit of the woman, crying revenge, should naturally act a part. The box on the walk became, in the course of the two days, a place where superstition, true to her character, acted the part of the antiquarian *dilettanti*, who, as the Scotch have it, are so fond of mutton, that they “lick the lair where the ewe lay;” and many came up to see the place where a ghost walked, without being able to detect the footprints.

On that evening, at the proper military hour, George Ross, with unmoved heart and immoveable countenance, took his post at the box—believed by

the picquet as fated to the destiny of his predecessors, but they uttered not a word, for by this time the reports of two soothsaying men had imparted to the affair the compactness of a veritable fact, and the effect was solemnity and awe. Then the appearances of the night indicated favourable, or rather unfavourable, auspices: the moon was in her majesty of unclouded light, the sky blue, and the wind hushed; but already we may venture to say, that untried conditions of human life make a new man out of the old microcosmic mystery, and George Ross was untried in the tactics of such wofully forlorn hopes as apparitions usually are. Then, what is more important, he was left, as the picquet obeyed the "march," and the solemn tread of the party as it gradually died away in his ear, with the deep impression of a dead certainty, that ghost or no ghost, it would unfailingly appear. And as for his scepticism, it was only the hardness of a nerve, as yet unaffected by the springs of all belief, which have a power undreamt of by the judgment. The night passed—but an ominous night, if one could judge by the unquiet sleepers in the quarters, whose imaginations were haunted more persistingly, if not with more certainty, than the watchful eyes of their comrade. But the morning came. George Ross, relieved, and taciturn and grim, was marched up to the colonel and a conclave of officers.

"Well, Ross," said the colonel, "what did you see?"

"I saw, sir, what my comrades saw."

"What was that?"

"A ghost, for certain."

"How did you ascertain the fact?"

"I could not ascertain it, sir."

"What mean you, man?"

"It gave me no time. It rolled down the avenue like a cloud of smoke from a cannon's mouth; with this difference, sir, that the light came out of the smoke, in place of the smoke after the light. My eyes swam, and my tongue would not cry the word, and when I recovered, it was gone."

"Most cowardly," said the colonel, angrily.

"Did you not promise to Lieutenant W——b," said Lieutenant N——n, "that you would call it to account?"

"I did."

"And you have disobeyed orders?" said the colonel.

"I have. But, Colonel W——h," continued the man, with a solemnity rendered ridiculous by his known imperturbability and impassiveness, "I will never keep sentry there again. You may order me up to a thirty feet wall, blazing with shot holes, or against a square of bristling bayonets, and I will obey; but there I will not keep sentry again, if the 'cat' should tear my muscles till the bones look out amidst blood."

"Where is Lieutenant W——b?" asked the colonel, still more annoyed.

"In bed, I suspect," answered the attending sergeant.

"Go, call him; he promised to be here at this hour, and it was to him I intrusted the choice of a man."

Just as he spoke, W——b came in, rubbing his eyes, and looking pale, and otherwise unwell.

"I should have been here," he said, "but, most unaccountably, a dead sleep took hold of me, and even when I was conscious the hour had come, I felt it impossible for me to rise, any more than if I had been bound to my bed by iron chains."

The colonel looked more angry, and turning to Ross, "You may go, sir. You have behaved like a poltroon."

The man turned sullenly, and left.

"He has disobeyed you, W——b," said the colonel, "as you have disobeyed me."

"What has happened?" asked the lieutenant, getting more grave and more pale.

"Seen the ghost," replied the colonel, "and got alarmed, so that he could not move to seize the cheat."

"Ross!" exclaimed W——b. "I would have staked my life upon his fortitude. There must be something more in this affair than we know of."

"Nonsense! You are ill, W——b," rejoined the colonel, "much like a ghost yourself. Get your breakfast, and meet me here at eleven, along with the other officers."

W——b was now satisfied himself that he was ill, and was silent and meditative.

"This is a more serious affair," continued the colonel, "than even a real apparition, for I am satisfied there is some roguery among the men, which must be detected—and, if detected, I will shew no mercy. We have already lost character in the town, where the people have got up a story of a murder perpetrated by the soldiers, and they have carried their feeling of enmity so far, as to threaten the regiment with total exclusion until it proves itself innocent. I am determined, therefore, to sift the affair to the bottom, and every one present must help me. Meanwhile, I will not withdraw from you, Lieutenant W——b, the commission I gave you to search out a proper watch. You will—having got quit of that death-like look—go to work again, and get some dare-devil to expose this chicane. By G—d!" he exclaimed, "he shall fire at it, or bayonet it. Say nothing to the men."

The meeting was dissolved. Ross, in the meantime, had been beset by a number of eager inquirers, who, as much influenced by his looks and manners as by his words, which carried to their ears the expected intelligence, were more impressed than before. The additional testimony spread, even in spite of the officers, who did all in their power to bring the men to their right reason.

At eleven o'clock the officers met again. There



were two reports made—the one by the officers, which stated that they could find no trace of any manœuvring among the men. They were all grave and impressed, and even the wildest of them shewed no indications of any knowledge of a trick. Every man and woman, too, had been again accounted for; nor could there be any delusion in this part of the inquiry, for the reason, that as the men slept in large rooms, many of them together, and even two a-bed, it was nearly impossible that any secret night-walking could have been transacted without the knowledge of so many, as to exclude every suspicion of concert. Lieutenant W——b's report was, if possible, more extraordinary. There was not a man in the regiment but was determined to resist an order to take the box. They had had meetings among themselves, and one had put up another, so that the regiment presented more the appearance of passive mutiny than mere general discontent.

“D——n them!” cried the colonel, “but I'll put a stop to this.”

“I doubt if it will be so easy,” said the senior captain. “No case of the kind is recorded for our guidance; and I fear if we were to have recourse to arrests, or anything like force, we might call up the real spirit of mutiny, in place of a wild, but in a sense very innocent, however foolish, superstition. There is, besides, no Article of War to force a soldier to face a ghost. It looks like one of those

cases of conscience in the religious world, where force tends only to ruin a good cause, never to conquer a bad one."

"There is a more serious view of it," said Lieutenant W——n. "There is no one would assist to arrest a defaulter in obedience to the order to watch, so we have no choice but conciliation. Some one of the 'fast' boys might be got over, in a private interview, to undertake the post, and a discovery of the trick would mend all."

At this juncture a sergeant entered, and putting his hand to his cap—

"An' please you, colonel, one of the men, Phil Maloney, says he will be sentry if the devil should be in the box when he mounts arms. Here he is."

"Well done, Phil," cried the colonel.

"Ay, but I did not, beg your honour's pardon, say if a certain person were in the *box*. Maybe I would not like to stand so many hours wid him. I said in the *hoax*, your honour—quite another thing."

"And you are satisfied it is a *hoax*?" inquired the colonel.

"No, I'm not sure," answered Phil. "I think not. I am pretty certain it's a raal ghost, and that's just the very reason why I will watch."

"And what will you do in the event of the ghost appearing to you?" said the colonel.

"Give him an inch of the bagnet," said Phil, "if he has any body to hould it, or maybe a bit of lead—any of 'em will do, your honour."

"But you must be careful," rejoined the colonel. "You must be sure to ask the watchword, for I fear that it is one of the men, and, angry as I am, I should be sorry for any mischance in a case where there can be scarcely any real rascality."

"Oh, I'll be sure to ask him who he is," said Phil; "but if he wount answer, he must take the bit metal—either the steel or the lead, it's all the selfsame to me, your honour; and if I kill him, the picquet will find the body of the ghost in the morning."

"But you cannot kill a ghost, Phil," said the colonel, getting into better humour.

"Can I not?—and why not?" was the reply. "All raal ghosts have white sheets or some clothes about 'em. Our ghost has too. And I just ask your honour how it can be, that if it is able to carry raal clothes, it should not be able to take a bit of my bagnet through the raal sheet? And sure if the ghost gets off, the sheet will stick, anyhow."

"W——b, you'll take charge of Maloney, and see that the men don't corrupt him."

W——b was asleep.

"He must have been up all night," said the colonel, addressing W——n; "waken him up."

"You are to look after Phil, and keep him full of heart."

"Yes," replied the lieutenant, looking around him, at a loss at first to know where he was.

"Did you hear that Maloney is determined to stab the ghost?"

"Stab the ghost!" repeated the young man, with a shudder.

"What next?" said the colonel, as a man from the town was placed before him. "What have you to say?"

"I was going home last night," said the man, "or rather this morning, and having had occasion to pass the end of the avenue leading to the barracks, I was surprised by a white figure hurrying down towards me, as if it came from this quarter. When very near me, it wheeled round, and took the path leading up by the north side of the trees. I looked well at it, not being a believer in ghosts, and so near was it that I could distinctly make out that the person—for person it no doubt was—had a stocking or sock on the left leg."

"Are you sure of that?" asked W——b.

"As sure as I see you at this moment."

"The left leg?" again inquired the lieutenant.

"Almost certain of the leg."

"Whatever leg," said the colonel, impatiently, "there was a stocking or sock on one leg?"

"There was, sir."


"Another proof that the mystery has its origin in our quarters," said the colonel; "and I think it will be proper a communication be read in the square, to put every man upon his guard, that Phil Maloney is determined, with the sanction of

his colonel, to stab the man who has been playing this dangerous game if he shall appear again and bid defiance to the call of the watch." And looking to the senior captain, he added, "You'll see that this is done."

The meeting broke up, and about one o'clock the bugle summoned the men in the square of the barracks. The offer made by Maloney was unknown to them, and they were all under the impression that they were called to answer for their contumacy. There was a dead silence when the captain read the proclamation; but no sooner did they hear that Phil Maloney, the real dare-devil of the regiment, had volunteered to undertake the watch, than a very general conviction prevailed, that whatever might be the issue, there would be a clearing up of the mystery—not that they had any idea that Phil would encounter flesh and blood, but that if the bayonet were used by Phil's hands, and went through the attenuated matter of a ghost's quasi-corporation, there would be, as a consequence, a belief in the hitherto sceptical officers, which would teach them that common men could be as right in some occult subjects as their learned masters. No such hubbub and clatter had ever been in a regiment. It was, in short, a grand occasion, wherein the men were arrayed against their commanders, with a chance of coming off victorious, without incurring the reproach or bearing the punishment of revolters. They looked

everywhere for Maloney, who was in safe keeping. No doubt they would make a hero of him, while in their hearts they viewed him as a martyr; though Phil considered himself neither the one nor the other, but just Phil Maloney, who cared for neither man nor ghost, and had no other object to serve than merely to work out a love for extremes—a kind of degree, being the last and greatest he was fond of beyond all things, not excepting the last grade of inebriety, a condition the most elevated to which any of God's creatures could be lifted up in this nether sphere of man's imperfections.

The hour of Phil's trial came, and, in a state of perfect sobriety, of which Lieutenant W——b had taken especial care, was marched to his post. There was again no want of moonlight, and consequently no excuse for the heroic Irishman, that if he failed to hit his mark, he had not the means of seeing it. He was, in all respects, in good trim for undertaking any of the exploits for which he had long been famous in the regiment, and the sergeant augured well for the issue. The night passed, and in the morning he was relieved. But what was once more the surprise of the sergeant, when he found even Phil Maloney more changed from his ordinary merry and reckless appearance and manner, than had been the case of any of the three others! The change in the other cases, however well marked, was not a contrast. In Phil's



case it was, and so great that he could scarcely be recognised for the same individual. His boisterousness was gone. The eye, which carried the never-failing leer, was dull and opaque. The round cheek and wry lip, betokening his love of fun, were changed into a lugubrious haggardness and most Methodistic gravity. His very voice, so full of the treble, on which his jokes were carried up into loud laughter, was mild and subdued. Phil had surely seen the ghost and been unable to strike, for such a change could have been produced by no earthly power.

Like George Ross, he was taken direct to the colonel.

"How is this, Maloney?" said the commander, the moment he caught a glance of Phil's lugubrious face. "Have you seen the ghost, too?"

"That I have," replied he. "And what's more, Phil Maloney will be Phil Maloney no more in this world, anyhow."

"Why?" asked the colonel.

"Didn't I see the raal ghost," said he, "coming down the loan like wind? and didn't I say, 'Now, Phil, this is your time?' and didn't I get my musket ready to give it the bit of steel I promised? Ay, and didn't I flee at the awful creature as I would have done at a Frenchman, and thrust my bagnet right slap through its body, and never met a bit of flesh to hould it agin? 'Lord!' said I to myself, as I looked and saw the creature sweep by,

and down the loan, no more hurt than if it had never been touched by the bagnet at all, 'this is more than ever I bargained for;' and I shook and trimbled in every limb of me. 'Phil, you must be a better man from this time, for ever, to your dying day.' And I resolved to mend my ways, and be a good boy—so I will."

"But are you quite sure you struck it, Phil?" inquired the colonel, with more the appearance of anxious curiosity than he had yet shewn.

"Sure! Do I not know what it is to put a bagnet in a man? and have I not done it a score of times on the field of battle, sure? Well, your honour, I saw, with those eyes, the bagnet go in, and come out at the other side of it, and yet never a stop nor a drop of blood, any more than if I had stabbed the wind—only a flutter in the creature, as if it had been frightened, and away it went."

"A flutter! what kind of flutter, Phil?"

"Just like a white dove when it gets out of your hands, and flies off."

"Did it make any noise, or speak?"

"Never a word, nor any sound of any kind, more than a dry leaf falling on soft earth."

"Had it any stockings or socks?"

"The man that said so this day," said Phil, "was a liar. There was no more of a stocking than Kathleen Macrae had on when she held up her bare foot to me—she had neither stockings nor



shoes in the wide world—and, said she, ‘Phil, will that do for a wife to you?’ No, your honour, the man did not stick to the raal truth. Now, there’s no use saying any more but this bit, that Phil Maloney will never stand sentry there agin—no, for all the drink in the canteen; and what’s more, he will never be the man he was any more.”

“You may go, Phil,” said the colonel. “I fear you are only a poltroon like the other three.”

This was, of a truth, the fourth testimony. The officers were reduced to silence, being simply in the not very uncommon position that is between two impossible alternatives, the one of which denied the vulgar belief, and the other repudiated the suspicion of a trick in the quarters; for it was utterly impossible to conceive that any man who had ears to hear, that a man like Maloney was standing in his direct way to pierce him with a bayonet, would have ventured into his path, where he had no other object to serve than merely the gratification of a whim. We may admit that the officers were not unaware of the possibility of somnambulism, but unfortunately that supposition was also an impossibility, in the circumstances, where the men, as we have said, were lodged at night in groups.

“We must have another new man,” said the colonel, after some meditation, in which his lip betrayed an imbittered determination. “And

here is W——b again awanting! Where is he? It is due to him to say, that as the darling of the men, over whom he exercises great power, I trusted to him, and I have still hopes we will secure some one to perform this duty in a proper manner. I would instantly resolve upon a trial of some of you officers. I am anxious even to take the box myself; for you know that, having risen from the ranks, I am not unacquainted with this duty; but the objections immediately occur to my mind,—first, that such a course would betray our want of confidence in our power of enforcing discipline; and, secondly, whatever was the issue, other than the confirmation of the men's beliefs, none of us would be credited. Go and see what has become of the lieutenant. I fear he is ill—he looked so miserably yesterday.”

A sergeant went out, and, after remaining longer than appeared necessary, returned with a long face.

“Lieutenant W——b is in the hands of the doctor,” said the man. “And I am told by him—I mean the doctor—that you are to wait together till he come. He has something very extraordinary to communicate to you; he requests also, that, in the meantime, you call Maloney before you again, and order him to bring his musket and bayonet—the latter of which is not to be handled.”

“More mystery still,” said the colonel; “but I

think we are now to hear a denouement. Go and bring Maloney."

The terrified Irishman was accordingly brought up, still under the force of his convictions of the necessity of amendment, and looking as like a well-living, church-going, if not prayerful, member of the community, as could be expected after so sudden a new birth.

"It's of no use, your honour," he said. "You may give it up, and trimble."

"Sit down, Phil, and hold your tongue," said the colonel. "Hand me your musket."

Phil complied, with some wonder in his eyes—what could be wanted with his musket?—muttering, "Sure, it is clane, and will pass muster;" but when he saw the colonel beginning to examine the clear and glittering weapon at the end of it, he was still more amazed at the folly of supposing that he was wrong in his declaration, that the bayonet had passed through nothing at all any thicker, or with more blood in it, than pure air, or mist at the very best.

The colonel seemed to be able to see nothing, nor could any of the officers detect a single blood-spot on the glittering instrument, which was laid down to await the coming of the man of medicine. That gentleman made his appearance in the course of ten minutes. Being naturally a phlegmatic man, on whom ordinary moral stimulants operated with less potency than the

medicines he administered, there was no wonder that the appearance he presented as he entered, should have drawn the attention of the officers, independently of their expectations from his message, as something more than ordinarily marvellous.

"Let us have Cameron, Neville, and Ross," he said; "I see Maloney is here."

The sergeant was proceeding to the door to call the men—"Stop," said the doctor; "you may go to W——b's room, and tell him to dress and come here."

"Why, I thought he was ill!" said the colonel.

"Not a bit of him," replied the doctor; "he is only sleepy and wonderfully awe-stricken, if not perhaps so grateful as he should be. Hand me the bayonet."

The weapon was placed in the doctor's hands. He went to work in a very different manner from that of the officers, not looking at the body of the instrument, but directing his gaze, aided by a pocket microscope, to the extreme. "It is just as I expected," he said. "Wait a little," he added, as he laid it down.

By and by came the three men, all rather serious looking; and, at length, came also Lieutenant W——b, who presented an appearance altogether inexplicable. He looked pale, yet the doctor had declared him not ill; he was grave, and yet, casting his eye on the lugubrious face of the penitential Irishman, he could not restrain a smile.

"This morning," said the doctor, "I was called to Lieutenant W——b, and found him complaining of a nervous restlessness. He said, too, that he felt some smarting about the back. I told him to roll down his shirt, upon examining which I thought I observed one or two drops of blood. On further examination, I discovered a scratched line running transversely—that is, across the back. It was quite well marked, and, indeed, at the one end had penetrated slightly below the skin, so as to produce the two or three drops of blood I had noticed.

"‘How did this occur?’ said I.

"‘Cannot tell,’ was the answer. ‘I have no remembrance whatever of having received any scratch or wound on that part of my body.’

"‘Let me examine the shirt more carefully,’ said I.

"And looking narrowly I found two holes very clearly made by a bayonet—the one on the left side being considerably larger than the other, just as if the weapon had pierced the linen at its entry, and again at the exit of its point. By this time, I may inform you, I had heard of Maloney having thrust his bayonet through the non-resisting ghost, and a thought flashed upon me.

"‘Let me see your feet,’ I said. ‘Why, sir, there’s mould upon them. You have been walking barefooted somewhere during the night.’

"‘Not that I know of,’ said he; ‘but I may

explain that, when very young, I used to go out while asleep, and walk in my father's garden. Yesterday morning I confess to have been very much astonished to find, when I awoke, that I had one of my gray socks on my right leg. Yesterday forenoon I was much struck by the statement of the witness from the town, that the figure he saw had a sock or stocking on the left leg. I questioned him as to his certainty about the particular leg, and was somehow relieved when he stuck to his assertion even as he did; for though a suspicion crossed my mind, I could not connect the circumstance in any satisfactory way with the notion of my having been out, neither can I account for a shudder I felt when Maloney said he would stab the ghost.' All that, I think," he continued, looking at W——b, "is about the amount of what you told me?"

"Very exact," replied the lieutenant; "and, upon casting my mind a little more about, I think I must have come back, after rushing along the shaded avenue, by the north footpath, and the door at the back of the quadrangle, which I was told had been found open for several mornings."

"It is necessary," said the doctor, "that nothing should be awaiting to satisfy the men of the regiment; and therefore it will be necessary that you undress so far, and shew the mark."

The lieutenant complied, and exhibited his back.

"You see," said the doctor, "it is just like a red thread laid along; and, what is worthy of your observation, Maloney had hit scientifically, for the mark runs below the fifth rib, and directly opposite to the heart, so that a few inches of difference in his step would have been the cause of transfixion. And all this corresponds exactly with the appearance of the point of the bayonet, which is marked by a very slight touch of blood. It is scarcely discernible by the naked eye, but you may easily satisfy yourself by the microscope."

This examination put an end to all doubt. The men were satisfied, and there was no more difficulty about the watch; but it was found necessary to set a sentry on him with the scratched back, in case he should come again under the bayonet of a Phil Maloney. As for Phil, he became more famous than ever—and what is more, he was made a sergeant; and thenceforth, a better soldier, or a better man, was not to be found in the army.

## The Long Slippers.

---

WITH all the reputation John Barclay had in his day for his inquiry into the nature of the soul, I am not sure but he will be better remembered for the part he had in the romance of the Long Slippers. Nothing is more curious and unaccountable than our love of abnormal things, whether physical or moral; nor is it required for raising our curiosity that the object shall, in its own radical nature from which it has diverged, be of much importance in its scale of being or action. Neither do we find the genius of mystery in anywise shy of mean things, if she cannot invest a very ordinary, or even humble, object with her charm of interest. Sometimes it happens that, in addition to this power of claiming our attention, the curiosity of science is brought into play at the same time, and then we have cases of a peculiar kind, such as that which I am about to relate, as it used to be told by the assistant of the professor, and on one occasion by the professor himself to the students of his class.

The late Mr Mac——d, boot and shoe maker, in Leith Street—that shrine where St Crispin, saint and miracle-monger, like all other saints, is solicited



so often in a day, by young belles and tight-laced spinsters, to perform one of a very difficult kind, viz., to administer a shoe smaller than nature demands, and yet without inflicting the curse of corns and bunions—was one evening engaged to get his said saint to comply with many requests proffered to him by his customers. The hour was late, and approaching the important period of shutters-up and awls down. He had had a good hour's work with a pretty eight-inch foot, which had as many tastes to satisfy, and sensibilities to administer to, as might serve the demands of an entire organism of moderate complications of nerves and vessels; and that pretty foot, pinched, yet delighted in resisting the resentments of nature, had just carried its tripping mistress beyond the precincts of the shop—for her corns were only in their spring-time—when another customer, of a very different appearance, entered.

“Ah, we shall have less trouble here,” he muttered to himself, as he looked at the “shauchled shoon” of an oldish woman, covered with a long blue cloak, surmounted by a hat in keeping with her feet-gear, and almost emulating in size the bushel-bonnet of some twenty years before. She had nothing of the appearance of a Scotchwoman, being brusque in her manner, and, as soon appeared, talked that sharp, clippy English which our people consider, though very erroneously, to indicate impudence.

"I want a pair of slippers, sir," she said.

"For yourself?"

"Oh, no—for another lady," she replied, "who is not in a condition for coming out, and neither does she want you to go to her. We shall manage the affair without an interview, I trust."

"There can be no difficulty," said Mr Mac——d, "if you can furnish me with the required dimensions."

"You can make slippers of any size, of course?" she said, as she began to search her pocket for a pattern or a string.

"Yes, of course," said he; "only you ladies will scarcely allow us to go so far in that respect as we would sometimes wish."

"Ah! I understand. We are proud of a small foot, you mean; and you must confess that it is a recommendation."

"For which we are often made to suffer," said he, in full remembrance of the foot he had been working with for so long a time.

"Well, here is the lady's measure," she said, after rummaging a pretty capacious pocket, and drawing out a narrow slip of brown paper, very neatly rolled up in the form of a circle; "that is the exact thing."

Mr Mac——d took it into his hand, and, having undone the pin with which it was fixed, he began to unfold the slip, drawing it out very deliberately, and with the ordinary expectation of finding the

normal number of inches. He arrived at what he considered to be about nine, went on to ten, from that to eleven, and at length arrived at the full foot. He now began to look for some mark back among the latter inches.

"Why, what is this?" he said. "Thirteen, I am satisfied—fourteen, fifteen. Why, madam, have you come here to make a fool of me?"

"Did not you say, sir, you could make slippers of any size?"

"Yes, but I do *not* make them fifteen inches long."

"But you're not done with the measure yet," said she, with a kind of smile.

"Nor do I intend to unroll another inch. I say you are fooling me. This is not the first of April."

"If I am fooling you, sir," said she, with more gravity, "I am also fooling myself, for I intend to pay you for the slippers. Pray, go on; you are not at the end of the slip."

"Well," said he, "suppose I do for the fun of the thing. Sixteen, seventeen—oh, I see," he continued, "it is the length of *both* slippers—ha! ha! That's the old story of the Chinaman, who, having got the measure of a pair of trowsers sent him from an English captain, with directions to walk exactly by the rule, and assuming that English breeches, like the Chinese, came down to the knees, concluded that the length stated in the measure represented both legs, and cut his cloth accordingly; so that the captain got a fisherman's

petticoat cut up in the middle. We don't cut the soles of both shoes at once, and then divide in two—ha! ha!” and the shoemaker was so fond of the joke that he would keep it up. “I have another story of a calculating Dutchman who sent the length of both legs to a schneider, to save the trouble of calculating each separately. You're not Dutch?”

“No, sir, I'm English, and sharp, too. The measure is that of one slipper, and I want a pair. Go on with the slip, if you please, sir.”

“Why, then, eighteen,” said he, “and that's a finish, and time too, I think. Pray, madam, what is the meaning of this mummery?”

“Mummery!” echoed the woman angrily; “no mummery. I said that that is the measure of the lady's foot. I want you to make these slippers for her, and all you have to do is to refuse, without insulting me. It may be the lady's misfortune to require slippers of that size; but it is not my fault, and misfortunes are not to be laughed at. She is one of God's creatures; and if He had not seen meet to make her foot of that length, she would have had a shorter one.”

“And do you mean,” said the shoemaker, getting angry in his turn, “that this is the size of any mortal foot?”

“I repeat,” said she, energetically, “that that is the measure which suits her, and I do not like my word to be doubted.”

The shoemaker looked steadfastly at the woman, and could see nothing in her face but earnestness and apparent truthfulness. Of course, we are to suppose that, being a sensible man, and having in the course of a long practice met with many long-peds, mounting up to fourteen and fifteen inches, he could not make sure of his scepticism. He saw plainly enough that if a foot got so far as fourteen inches, it might go to fifteen; and what right had he to draw the line there, and say that a tenth part might not be added? If he stumbled at the eighteenth, what right had he to say he could get over that small tenth? and if he could surmount the tenth, why not get over two tenths, or three, or four, till he got to ten tenths, or fifteen inches, and so on through sixteen and seventeen to eighteen? This kind of ratiocination really occurred to the sensible shoemaker; and as the woman stuck to her last, he could not see very well how he could run from it, at least with the levity of incredulity. So, looking again at the woman—

“Do you really mean what you say?”

“I do,” she replied.

“Well, then, will you not consider me impertinent if I put one question to you, concerning this lady with so marvellous a foot?”

“I will not say I am at liberty to answer your question,” she replied, cautiously; “but you may put it.”

“The question is a simple one,” said he. “Does

this lady ever go out into the public thoroughfares?"

"I can answer that," she said. "Never; sometimes, in the country, where there is no one to see her, she may take an airing, but never if there is any chance of her being seen by human eye."

"Most wonderful!" ejaculated the shoemaker. "And now, as my curiosity is raised, might I not ask her name and address?"

"No, sir—I am prohibited."

"Nor whether she is single or married?" said he, persistingly, for he had at last become serious.

"I do not think," answered she, with much appearance of honesty, "that I am tied down as regards that. Married."

"Married! And what size of a foot has her husband?—I mean, what size of man is he?"

"Why," answered she, "much about your own. And as for his foot, it is not larger than mine," shewing hers; "I know this, because it is not many days yet since I put on his shoes, on a wet night—but, of course, with his permission—and they fitted me moderately well."

"Then, how do they get on," said he, "if she remains in the house always?"

"Oh, she goes out in a coach, at times."

"Of her own? For, if not her own, the coachman or cabmen must see something to wonder at."

"She has a carriage of her own."

"But what do you say to the servants?"

"Why, they are secret and discreet, and that is all, I daresay. And, if you please, let us finish our business. Do you make them, or not? The price is of your own fixing."

"I will certainly make them," said he, "were it for nothing else than to have it to say that I made a pair of slippers for a lady, eighteen inches in length. But stay, what is the girth at the instep?"

"If you will look at the slip, sir, you will find a small snick with the scissors. Count from that, to the shorter end."

"Ah, I see—here it is. Let me measure both the length and girth by my rule."

And having gone through the process, he said—

"I have been very near the length,—eighteen and three-eighths, and the girth ten inches."

"And they are to be made of red morocco," she added, "with light blue binding, and a neat bow of yellow silk ribbon at the instep."

"I understand," said he; "very stylish. My only other wonder is, why she wishes them so fine, when no one sees her."

"Ah! sir, pride, pride," she said. "You will not take that out of any one, whether with long feet or short."

"Well," said the shoemaker, now perfectly convinced of the truth of what the woman said, "I shall certainly make the slippers—and, hark ye, I would cheerfully give them for nothing, for the pleasure of trying them on."

"Impossible," said the woman. "I will call for them, and I wish to have them by Thursday night, when I shall come here, at the same hour, and pay for them."

The woman accordingly departed; and Mr Mac——d having shut his shop, went home, taking with him, to shew to his wife, the wonderful measure. There were many theories started that night to account for what was, if we may use the expression, a clear mystery; and, probably, the eyes of the shoemaker's wife had never been so largely expanded since that day when Mr Mac——d put to her the great question of a woman's fortune. Next morning, having left the lamp of curiosity burning at home, as clearly as it could do, in the very heart of the "mist of mystery," he set about cutting out the material for the slippers, and shaping the uppers and the soles—smiling to himself the while, as he thought of just handing the cut pieces to one of the workmen in the workshop, without saying a word more than common, and without any change of countenance. This he accordingly did, saying, simply, that the slippers were for a lady; and this "snabery," as the place is sometimes called, straightway became a scene of much wonderment, mixed with traces of incredulity, but not more than any other temple of mystery witnesses among the offerings.

It was about two days after this, and when one



of the slippers was finished, that Dr Barclay, then a young student under Dr Alexander Munro, got his eyes coloured with the witch-glamour of this strange affair. Mr Mac——d was his shoemaker, and he had called about a pair of boots that were being made for him, at the moment when the extraordinary-looking article lay upon an inner table in the shop. Under any circumstances, the young anatomical student, curious about the structure of the human body, would have been attracted by the slipper, but it happened at that time that the students were divided on a question of feet—not of prosodian—arising out of a fight between two youths of the name of Stewart and M'Intosh, who had quarrelled about the pedals of their young mistresses. Stewart was a short-foot advocate, and the herculean M'Intosh preferred a slender long one—a division which arrayed on either side nearly a half of the attendants of the college. Some questions, with the slipper in his hand, soon secured for Barclay the startling information that there was a female actually in Edinburgh for whose proper foot the said slipper had been made by measurement, and his eye became bright with wonder and curiosity; but he was damped again by the intelligence that the lady was a secret, only next moment to be seized by the spirit of romantic adventure.

“We must ferret her out,” said he. “Can you give me no cue?”

“You may follow the woman who is to call for

the article to-morrow night about eight o'clock," said the shoemaker.

The idea was delightful to the young Quixote; and, to gratify some private object, he got a sheet of paper whereon he commenced to draw the slipper according to its natural size. Having finished his work, he carried it away with him, proceeding direct to the College, where, having found the short-foot leader, Stewart, they wrote over the picture "M'Intosh's love," and below, "Omphale's slipper for thrashing Hercules." The exhibition immediately drew around it the members of both factions, and increased, if possible, the acerbity of the feud—for the mythical character of the slipper was as yet the prevailing idea; but by and by it began to be spread among the fiery spirits that the picture actually represented the foot of a lady in the New Town, with the touching addition that she was "a secret,"—that she never came, or was allowed to come, out in the face of day, and among the sons and daughters of men; yet that she kept a carriage, into which she was occasionally driven out in unfrequented places for air: all which was really, according to the statement by the woman with the big bonnet and the long blue cloak, not further from the truth than many other mysterious stories very well accredited. These were, indeed, respectable elements of romance more than sufficient to move the hearts of the far-famed Edinburgh students, whose sprees, often carried to the

confines of ferocity, are as often redeemed by the moving feeling of a vindication of some down-trodden right or injured person. That misfortune clouded the destiny of the lady who wore these slippers—though of bright red morocco, and edged with blue, and with the bow of yellow ribbon—could scarcely be doubted; for even M'Intosh, the leader of the long-foots, could scarcely hold up his face for the full measure of eighteen inches, by a girth of ten. But, then, might not there be a beautiful face destined to look down upon those slippers, with that expression which poets give to Patience, when she is placed upon a monument, and smiles at Grief; and could anything be more touching than Beauty looking through perpetual tears at an unjust and cruel decree of the gods, perpetrated on the feet of a woman? Then she would be the daughter of a family with a great head, who sold her—because of her great feet—to some scoundrel tocher-hunter, who had placed upon her the embargo of his hatred and shame, so that she could not look out and enjoy that glorious orb which shines equally to the short-foots as to the long. The anger of our students against each other on the great subject of their split gave way before the stronger and more engrossing emotions of curiosity and pity; and Barclay and the two leaders of the factions were deputed to hunt all Edinburgh, if necessary, to bribe caddies, and pay court to servant-maids, and exercise all other likely

means to get at the bottom of this mystery. Meanwhile, as we may well suspect, this great-foot would soon make the circuit of the city.

Before the hour mentioned by the shoemaker, John Barclay, with his two romantic friends, were at Leith Street. The woman with the blue cloak had not yet called, and Mr Mac——d advised the young gentlemen rather to hang about the door and watch than come into the shop, where she would perhaps see in the strangers something to raise her suspicion. This plan, so reasonable, they at once followed. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards a carriage stopped at the door. The blinds were up, though it was pretty dark. What could be the meaning of this? Was it a call in place of the woman with the blue cloak? The students were all agog. They separated, they met, they went round the coach, they whispered, and separated again. They saw Mr Mac——d come bareheaded to the door. The blind was drawn down only a half, and the veiled face of a woman might have been imperfectly seen by the light from the shop window; but that woman did not speak.

“Is the article ready?” said the rough voice of a man.

“What article, sir?” replied the shoemaker.

“Hold your head nearer, sir,” said the same voice, gruffly.

Mr Mac——d obeyed, and appeared to receive the description of the article in a whisper.

"Oh, yes—all ready."

"What is the price?"

"Ten and six," was the reply of the shoemaker;  
"they are so extraordinarily"——

"Hold your peace," said the voice, abruptly checking him. "Go, bring them; but, mark, tie them up in a paper, and you will get the money."

Was it the slippers? The students heard so much of the conversation; and as the shoemaker re-entered the shop to obey the command of the gruff voice, six eyes were watching him from the window, as if their looks would have broken the glass if obstructed in that gaze.

"He is tying them up," whispered Stewart.  
"You see the red and the blue edgings, and, Lord! what a slipper!"

"The lady is inside, veiled, even in the dark," said M'Intosh.

"And that is the tyrant who spoke," said Barclay. "You see it's all true I said."

"Very wonderful and mysterious," rejoined he of the short-foots and he of the long.

In scarcely more time than was occupied by these intense and enthusiastic whispers, the shoemaker had tied up the slippers, and, having brought them out, and handed them into a hand ready to receive them, he, after some whispering, got the money and bowed. The blind was then drawn slap up.

"Now's your time," said Mr Mac——d to Barclay, as the carriage began to move.

"Up behind, Jack," said Stewart, in the ear of Barclay, "and M'Intosh and I will run haunchmen."

The coachman, who had evidently got instructions as to his route, immediately applied the whip, and carried off with him not only the mystery, but him who was subsequently to dive into a still greater mystery—"the nature of the human foot." Stewart and M'Intosh, both fleet fellows, kept hard a-wheel, and on they all went up Leith Street, and along Princes Street, thereby raising very natural hopes that the object of their hunt resided in some of the great houses in the west-end, where the lords are to be found. After having proceeded along Princes Street some way, a communication was made by the same rough voice inside to stop at the Mound. And there accordingly the carriage stopped, Barclay dismounting on the instant, not altogether at his ease in respect to the male individual inside, whose manner of speaking indicated the character imputed to him by his outside attendants. The three students now watched at a distance, keeping their eyes fixed upon both sides of the carriage. The door was opened by the man inside, and out he came. He appeared to look somewhat suspiciously around him, and the students could each have sworn that his eye was bent upon him exclusively. The door of the carriage was shut, and the veiled woman now, of course, sat inside, in all the solitude and darkness of her

grief. Barclay followed the man, and Stewart, venturing up to the side of the carriage, and placing his ear to the pannel, heard some one cough inside.

"Go to the other door," he whispered to M'Intosh. "If one can hear a cough, he can also hear something else perhaps."

And so, like midnight thieves, they listened, with ears quickened by the keenness of their inflamed spirits. Stewart, to whose side she probably sat next, was singularly fortunate in his detections; for he was certain he heard vocables coming from that woman.

"What a miserable life is this. But how can I get quit?"

"We shall see," said Stewart to himself.

"I could no sooner get away than I would be mobbed. O God! why didst Thou form one of Thy creatures so?"

"A hard question," muttered Stewart.

"I will never forgive my parents for putting me under the power of that harsh man."

"You have friends here you little think of," again said Stewart.

"I am sure he does not love me; it was the money—ah, the money!"

"Ah, the money!" ejaculated the listener.

"What has become of him? Some interview with that velvet-coated villain who works to his purpose."

"One mark anyhow," said Stewart. "There are few velvet coats in Edinburgh."

At this moment a tingle from the point of the coachman's whip on the right ear made him knock his head against the panel, and rendered his other ear as deaf as that panel, and he retreated suddenly behind the carriage, where he met M'Intosh coming from the other side, startled by the crack.

"I have heard nothing," said M'Intosh, "and that fellow suspects us. Did you hear anything?"

"Yes; all true—most wonderful."

He was just about to explain, when up came the anatomist.

"The fellow is up there," said Barclay, speaking very mysteriously, "with a low-looking rascal, with a large velvet coat, clear mother o' pearls, and a gold-lace band round a bad hat; but I could hear nothing."

"Oh, but I could, and did," said Stewart. "She has had a monologue—it's all out. I heard her say, that he with the velvet coat—doubtless, a low flunkey—is a villain who works to the purposes of her tyrant. She accuses Heaven for making her with these terrible feet, charges her husband with mercenary motives, and treating her brutally, and sighs to get free. Oh, what a voice!—sweet, plaintive, musical—even in its murmurings. It *couldn't* come out of any mouth but one forming an elegant feature in a beautiful face."



"Let us open the door, and carry her off *brevi manu*," cried the spirited Barclay.

"Done!" said the herculean M'Intosh.

"I only doubt," said the leader of the short-foots, "we couldn't manage her. We can't carry her. And how could she get on with these great feet of hers?"

But they were not left to decide upon this great enterprise: scarcely had Stewart got the words "great feet" out of his mouth, when the master of the lady with these feet stood before them.

"Wherefore is this?" he said, sternly. "You are watching this coach. Don't you know that one's coach is his travelling castle, and that, by the laws of England, no one has a right to enter therein unless the proprietor is a breaker of the laws? What suppose there is a secret in that coach? I admit there is, but is a secret a crime? or if I choose to keep that secret, is that any reason why you should know it? Get ye home to your beds, or, if it is too early, set off a larking elsewhere. I am not a man to be trifled with. I give you warning—make off."

"We won't," answered the herculean M'Intosh; "you have a lady in that coach confined against her will, merely because she is unfortunate in having a long foot."

"Yes, she has a pretty-longish foot," replied the man—"but what is that to you? She hasn't kicked you with it, as you deserve. And what

would you have me do with her? Take her out into your assemblies and routs, so that she might shew these feet to a gaping crowd, who would pity and despise her, and laugh at me?"

"You took her for her money," rejoined Barclay, "and now confine her and tyrannise over her. Suppose she wished to enjoy life a bit, and to go out—as her fortune may entitle her—into these assemblies, or the public streets, or anywhere else; Is it to be tolerated, in this free country, that you are to make a prisoner of her, against all the laws of humanity?"

"And what makes the matter worse," said Stewart, "she is, we understand, a high lady—with corresponding rights and susceptibilities."

"Oh, yes, I admit," said the man, "that she is a high lady, and, what is more, a titled one. I might even admit more, though you have no right to any admissions from me. She is higher and greater than your great magnate in these parts, the Duchess of Buccleuch. What of that? Didn't the Countess of Strathmore marry Bawny Bowes? Didn't the Lady Cassilis run away with Johnnie Faa? Because a lady stoops to marry a proper man, is that any reason why a parcel of puppies should run after them, and hold out their fingers at them? Get off, and let the carriage go where I choose to take my wife."

"We choose to say no," replied M'Intosh.  
"We are deputed, by the students of the College,

to search into this mystery, and we are determined to do it. We insist upon seeing the lady, and ascertaining whether it is her will that you should make her a prisoner and slave. By heavens!" continued the Hercules, grandly, "we"——

"Shall know the length of her great toe," cried the fellow, laughing ironically. "Now, sir, be calm. I tell you, you sha'n't. It is only I who have a right to see that. It is my superlative privilege alone."

"A man may have a right to see a lady's great toe," again said M'Intosh, "and yet have no right to tread upon it."

"I have no time," cried the man, "to bandy yelps of impudence with puppies. Here, Williams."

And turning to where the man with the velvet coat and mother o' pearls stood, he repeated, "Here, Williams."

The varlet came up, and stood alongside of him who appeared to have the command of him.

"Now, gentlemen—if gentlemen you be"—he continued, putting his arms over his breast, and standing in a kind of mock ease, "do your best." Then turning to the coachman, he cried—

"John, drive on; you know whither; go at the top of your nags' speed—and if any of those fellows approach, use your whip."

"And," cried M'Intosh, seizing in an instant the two men by the neckerchiefs, "run Jack, run Bill."


And so they did, making after the carriage as if their very lives depended upon their tracing it to its destination. Meanwhile, M'Intosh held on; and such was the size of the young man, and such his strength, that neither of his opponents seemed to wish to contest their liberty with him.

"Now," he said, after holding them very quietly, so long as he thought they could not, in getting quit, make up with the carriage, "you may go; but depend upon it, whether we succeed to-night or not, we will find out this lady, and bring her under the protection of the authorities."

On hearing this speech, he of the velvet coat, mother o' pearls, and band, burst out into a loud laugh.

"Why, man," said he, "that will beat all the students of Edinburgh College. The master and I are too 'cute for ye."

And, going away together, they seemed, as M'Intosh looked after them, to enter into an earnest conversation or consultation, one of the objects of which was, no doubt, to elude the Hercules. No sooner, accordingly, had they got at the distance of twenty yards, than they separated, as if by a preconcerted signal, and set off through the crowd, at the foot of South Hanover Street, as fast as they could run. It seemed vain for M'Intosh to follow, and he resolved that he would not—returning along Princes' Street in



the hope of being made up to, in a short time, by his two co-adventurers, in the search after the long foot.

Nor was the young man's hope long in being realised. Barclay and Stewart were coming east, arm in arm, and looking much disconcerted, as M'Intosh was proceeding onward. They met, as the discomfited knights-errant who had found the lovely Rixamara, not only carried off by her husband, but actually reconciled to him—a most uncourteous thing to men whose business it was to protect oppressed damoselles, with whatever kind of feet.

“Gone,” said Stewart, as they came up; “we'll never get another trace. There is an assembly, and in the thick and hurry-scurry of the carriages, our quarry escaped us.”

“Nor do I see any hope,” said Barclay, “but in meeting that kenspeckle with the velvet jacket and the mother o' pearls. He can scarcely be in Edinburgh and escape us all for many days.”

“Ah! gentlemen,” said a voice behind them, “here he is.” And there, certainly, was the very man with the velvet jacket. “I'm not unwilling to meet you,” he said; “and I don't wonder at all at your being curious about the lady. She's a miracle, no doubt on't; and, though I am my master's servant, I can't say I altogether like the thing—I mean certain ways of acting, the husband's dodge. A lady's a lady, whatever like she be; and, though I'm a servant, a servant is not

without feelings. You want to know something, and I could tell something. And there's a way of being handsome; you understand?"

"You want money," said Barclay.

"Money—no," replied the man. "I don't consider a few white bobs, slipped into one's hand to open one's mouth, and let out a few wonders, money."

The students consulted a little, and joined so as to bring out seven and sixpence.

"Will that please you?" said M'Intosh.

"Quite handsome," said he; "but I knew you were gentlemen. And now, as I don't know to a nicety what it is you are after, you had better put any question to me; only you know you're not to split master and me by being too particular, and giving him a scent, you know."

"Well, then," said Barclay, "we have seen a pair of slippers, said to have been made for the lady who just now went off in the carriage."

"My mistress—yes, no doubt."

"Well, these slippers measure eighteen inches and five-eighths, and we want to know whether her foot is really that length?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the man. "She han't corns, or bumps, or bunions; and did you ever hear of a woman without these having a slipper larger than she needs? If seventeen inches would do for my lady, think ye she'd have eighteen?"

"But will they fit her?" said Barclay.

"Fit her, sir—neat, neat, sir."

"Neat as a cloud of mist fits Benvoirlich," added M'Intosh, who, amidst their anxiety, could not restrain the remark.

"Just so, sir," said the man. "I know it, because I have had her last pair, which were of yellow morocco, in my hand often."

"And what like is her face?"

"Very beautiful; but you know, young masters, that one who never sees the sun, except through a window, must look melancholy and sad."

"And it is her husband who confines her?"

"Yes, sir. I have no doubt she would get away if she could."

"Does he beat her?"

"Hush!—daren't speak."

"And is she really a lady?"

"I'm assured of it. You can't speak to her but you are satisfied she is a lady every inch of her."

"And has a title?"

"A very grand title, sir. You would be astonished to hear it; but, excuse me, I can't mention it. The public might get suspicious, and flock to the house, and it would spurt out that it came from me, and so I'd be discharged."

"Then where does she live?" at length asked Barclay, coming to the main point.

"Why, young masters, consider," said the man, "you would be placing me in danger by pressing me to answer that. But, let me see. You have been

handsome to me, and if I could see my way exactly, I wouldn't care to run a little risk. I don't want to deceive you, but if you will give me all night to consider, and especially if you were to stand between me and danger, I might come to the resolution. It is rather alarming to me at present."

"Where could we see you?"

"Why, meet me to-morrow," replied the man, gravely, "at the middle of the Mound, yonder, say at twelve o'clock precisely, and I may put you on the clue, whereby you may arrive at what you want, without raising any suspicion against me. Do you agree?"

"We cannot make a better of it," said Stewart.

"But swear you will not give us the slip."

"By the long slippers, I won't," said the man.

"So, good-night."

And, without waiting further parley, the man with the velvet coat went off, leaving the three knights-errant in a very erratic state of mind—if not also erotic, for the mystery had extended itself from the feet to the face—and, somehow or other, such is the charm of female beauty, as exhibited in the countenance, that all consideration of imperfections in other members is forgotten, if, indeed, these do not often suggest a feeling of another kind, which mingles with and softens the stronger emotion.

"I feel a strong interest for this singular being,"



said Barclay, as the three walked eastwards, in the direction of their respective lodgings. "She reminds me of that remarkable woman who was, for a time, the wonder of the Athenians—named, if I remember rightly, Lamia, after the Gorgons. She seems to have been made with a view to represent in her person, the principles of beauty and deformity, or, good and evil—her face having been one of the loveliest ever seen in a country famous for beauty, and the rest of her body, beginning with the shoulders, exhibiting contortions and distortions, hideous to behold. To look into her face was to be charmed into love; to fix your eyes on the other parts of her body, was to be cast into an unaccountable hatred. But then it was said, that if the observer could so contrive to blend the two feelings into one, responding to the entire person of Lamia, the result was a delicious pity, softer than love, and yet as full of attraction."

"A little mythological," said Stewart; "but here there is the real—a thing of flesh and blood, with feelings and motives like our own—and, 'pon my soul, though the leader of the 'short-foots,' I am in love with her; yet, I confess, I do not know if nine-tenths of the feeling may not be made up of mere sympathy for nobility in distress, and, therefore, purely romantic."

"And mine is anatomic," said Barclay.

"And mine is cabalistic," added M'Intosh.

They were now standing at the Register Office,

and were soon made up to by several of the "fast" students, who had been all day in a state of high curiosity, as to the issue of the adventure. "Have you found an owner to the long slipper?"—"Who is the lady with the monster slipper?"—"Where is the lady with the eighteen-inch slipper?" were the questions put in succession. But these questions could not be answered satisfactorily where they now were, and were better fitted for a tavern, where the necessary or natural amount of speculation, made ingenious by drink, would gratify the ardent spirits of young aspirants to scientific or adventurous fame. So they adjourned to a favourite tavern on the South Bridge, and sat down to potations better suited to elevate them into the altitudes of the dithyrambic, than to enable them to thread the sinuosities of "Hunt the Slipper." Yet it was not often they had a subject of speculation which interested their feelings of adventure, at the same time that it contributed to the progress of science.

"It is proper, gentlemen," said Barclay, rising up, "that I should state to you the issue of our mission. We have got, that is, we will get, a foot to our slipper—that foot belongs to a lady—that lady bears a title of dignity, and, maugre the foot, is beautiful—but by that malformation"—

"No malformation," cried M'Intosh, "only a little too much of a good thing."

"Well, by that 'too much of a good thing,' she

has been compelled to marry a low blackguard, who, even in the middle of Edinburgh, condemns her to a life of darkness and solitude, so that we have the dark ages returned upon us."

"But not without its knights. We will liberate her," cried several voices, almost cracked with enthusiasm.

"We will bear her off in triumph on the tops of our shoulders," cried others.

"Yes," continued Barclay; "but before we can carry her off we must get hold of her, and before we can get hold of her, we must know where she is, and before we can do that we must meet the man with the velvet coat, who is to give us the information to-morrow, at twelve o'clock, on the Earthen Mound. After that, we shall devise our plan for liberating this oppressed damoselle."

This information was calculated to produce an increase of that enthusiasm which had already fired the ardent youths, and which threatened to make the proprietor of the slipper more famous than she of glass slipper notoriety. And certainly many triumphs seen through the vivifying and magnifying medium of that illuminated moral haze, produced out of certain brains by the touch of peculiar ideas, and realised too, have had less of real fact apparently at the foundation. But it is more easy to say what their hopes pointed to, than to set forth the multiplicity of speculations

by which the reigning idea was surrounded and adorned. Every one had a theory and a scheme bound up together, which, exposed to the bellows-blast of their excitement, soon got into a red heat, and was put upon the clanging anvil of their critical judgment,—to be moulded into the required practical working shape. Yet, amongst all this noise and clamour, there was the ordinary moderate vein of prudence, by which enthusiasts so often flatter themselves into the thought that they are very temperate calculators. For instance, they were not to interfere with the preliminaries on the Mound. These were to be left to the three deputies, who had already acquitted themselves so well; though, of course, that wise suggestion was not to exclude the more eager from being at or near the place where the expected information was to be got—only, they would appear as disinterested townsmen going about their usual business. And so all was arranged.

The prudent scheme was accordingly carried out. We cannot say how many of these young men were on the Mound, or about the precincts thereof, on the following day, at twelve o'clock; but certain it is, Barclay, Stewart, and M'Intosh were true to their appointment with him of the velvet coat and mother o' pearls; but they did not find the Earthen Mound the comparatively quiet place they had seen it two or three days before. Wombwell's Menagerie had taken up its position

nearly in the midst of it—had already got up its lions and tigers, in portentous array, on the spreading canvas, and was resonant of French horns, and mysterious growlings from behind the wooden boards. Numbers of people were collected, and our three students threaded their way among them, somewhat disappointed, and doubtful whether they might find their man. Alongside of Wombwell were, of course, the ordinary satellites who attend upon that great Saturn,—“The Northumbrian Dwarf”—“The Williams Tragedy”—“The Pig-Faced Lady;” all the wonders of the day were there collected, and more than we have here enumerated.

“Ho! here is our man,” cried Barclay to his companions, whose gaze was directed among the people, eager to catch a velvet coat.

“Where?” answered they.

“Why, not there,” said Barclay; “look up.”

And so they did, to their wonder, no doubt, for there, in front of a large caravan, and upon the front boards thereof, stood the man with the velvet coat. He was roaring at the top of his voice, and in his hands were two slippers of gigantic size, made of red morocco, edged with blue, and having, at the instep thereof, a bow of yellow ribbon. These slippers formed a part of the subject of his harangue, for, every now and then, he held them up to the gaze of the wondering crowd. Then, behind, rose up a sheet of canvas, towering

over the top of the caravan, with a figure thereon of a woman, over whose head a scroll set forth her title of dignity, derived from nature's own heraldry,—"The Royal Westmoreland Wonder—measuring, from the sole of the foot to the crown of her head, seven feet two inches."

"This is worse than the windmill," said Barclay.

"Or the flock of sheep," answered Stewart.

"Or the ass with the terrible ears," added M'Intosh; "but we shall see the feet, anyhow."

And the students mounted the broad steps, at the top of which they encountered their friend with the velvet coat, whose face, as he took their sixpences, was rendered in some degree interesting, by a leer in his right eye, and a wink with the left.

"The foot is inside, gentlemen, along with the lady herself. Her title you see up there. She is royal; and this is her own private carriage. All right, you see. Walk in."

And in they went. They were in the presence, at last, of the mysterious foot and its proprietor,—a large, coarse, frouzy woman, with more pimples on her face than stars on her escutcheon. She sat, she rose, she walked, and talked, all according to her character; nor could they see any dissatisfaction or *mauvais honte*, as if she was not perfectly at home in her caravan. As for the feet, they were large enough, by being an inch, or perhaps two, beyond the anatomical rule, but, even with the aid of padding, could not approach within four inches of

the morocco device outside. Exaggeration is the poetry of showmen—not more than it is the garniture of the most part of the wonderful things with which the world is amused or hoaxed.

The explanation is not very difficult. It appeared, according to John Barclay's version of the story, as he recounted the adventure to his pupils, while shewing them the skeleton of a large foot, that Mr Mac——d the shoemaker had, in the interval between the order given by the woman with the blue cloak, and the delivery of the slippers, seen the proprietor of the caravan, who was the husband of the giantess. Now, the shoemaker was not averse to a bit of drollery, and did not hesitate to tell the man, in return for his explanation of the slippers, that some medical students were curious about the size of the foot, and were determined to trace out the proprietor of it—in ignorance, as they were, of the arrival of the giantess. The man took the hint, and having seen the young men hanging about the carriage, thought it would be something in the way of trade to keep up their curiosity. His statements to them, at the Mound, were partially framed from their questions, which shewed they were after something more romantic than a giantess, and so he fed the flame. The man with the velvet coat helped in his own way. And then to account for what Stewart heard through the panel of the carriage, we are to keep in mind, what was

true, that the woman was dissatisfied with her fate, and often did groan a little to herself. But there is just as little doubt that Stewart made her "all his fancy painted her" to his friends.



## The Diamond Eyes.

---

WHEN I entered Edinburgh College the students were tolerably free from any of those clubs or parties into which some factitious subject—often a whim—divides them. In the prior year the spirit of wager had seized a great number of them with the harpy talons of the demon of gambling, giving rise to consequences prejudicial to their morals, as well as to their studies. A great deal of money among the richer of them changed hands upon the result of bets, often the most frivolous, if not altogether ridiculous. Now, we are not to say that, abstracted from the love of money, the act of betting is unqualifiedly bad, if rather we may not be able to say something for it, insomuch as it sometimes brings out, and stamps ingenuity or sagacity, while it represses and chastises arrogance. But the practice at the College at that time was actually wild. They sought out subjects; the ay and the no of ordinary converse was followed by the gauntlet, which was taken up on the instant; and they had even an umpire in the club, a respectable young man of the name of H——y, who was too wise to

bet himself, but who was pleased with the honour of being privileged to decide the bets of the others.

In the heat of this wild enthusiasm, it happened that two of these youths, one called Henry D——t, and the other Frank Hamilton, were walking on the jetty which runs out from the harbour of Leith a full mile into the Forth. D——t was the son of a West India planter, who allowed him £300 a-year, every penny of which was spent in paying only a part of his bills long before the year was done; one of which bills I had an opportunity of seeing, to my wonder—how any one could eat £15 worth of tarts and sweetmeats in the course of not many months! Hamilton was the son of a west country proprietor, and enjoyed the privilege of using to his ruin a yearly allowance of £250. In the midst of their sauntering they hailed two of their friends,—one Campbell, a sworn companion of the young West Indian; and the other Cameron, as closely allied to Hamilton,—all the four being, as the saying goes, “birds of a feather,” tossing their wings in the gale of sprees, and not always sleeping in their own nests at night.

As they approached the end of the jetty, they met a lad who had wounded one of these large gulls called Tom Norries,—a beautiful creature, with its fine lead-coloured wings, and charming snow-white breast, and eye like a diamond.

“I will give you a shilling for the bird,” said D——t.

"But what are you to do with it?" replied the lad. "I would not like it to be killed. It is only hurt in the wing; and I will get half-a-crown for it from one who has a garden to keep it in."

"No, no," said D——t, "I'll not kill it. Here's your half-crown."

And the bargain was struck. D——t, with the struggling bird in his hand, went down, followed by his friends, one of the side stairs to the stone rampart, by which the jetty is defended on the east. There they sat down. The sun was throwing a blaze of glory over a sea which repaid the gift with a liquid splendour scarcely inferior to his of fire; and the companions of the bird, swirling in the clear air, seemed to be attracted by the sharp cries of the prisoner, but all its efforts were vain to gratify its love of liberty and their yearning. It was in the hands of those who had neither pity for its sufferings, consideration for the lessons it carried in its structure, nor taste for estimating its beauties. One of another kind of students might have detected adaptations in the structure of that creature sufficient to have raised his thoughts to the Author of design, and the source of all beauty,—that small and light body, capable of being suspended for a great length of time in the air by those great wings, so that, as a bird of prey, it should watch for its food without the aid of a perch; the feathers, supplied by an unctuous substance, to enable them to throw off the water and

keep the body dry; the web-feet for swimming; and the long legs, which it uses as a kind of stay, by turning them towards the head when it bends the neck, to apply the beak—that beak, too, so admirably formed—for taking up entire, or perforating the backs of the silly fishes that gambol too near the surface. Ay, even in these fishes which, venturing too far from their natural depths, and becoming amorous of the sun, and playful in their escapades, he might see the symbol of man himself, who, when he leaves the paths of prudence, and gets top-light with pleasure, is ready, in every culmination of his delirium, to be caught by a waiting retribution. Ah! but our student, who held the bird, was not incurious—only cold and cruel in his curiosity.

“Hamilton,” said he, “that bird could still swim on the surface of that sea, though deprived of every feather on its body.”

“I deny it,” replied Hamilton. “It will not swim five minutes.”

“What do you bet?—The old watchword.”

“Five pounds.”

“Done.”

And getting Campbell to hold the beak, which the bird was using with all its vigour, he grasped its legs and wings together by his left hand, and began to tear from the tender, living skin the feathers. Every handful shewed the quivering flesh, and was followed by spouts of blood; nor

did he seem to care—although the more carefully the flaying operation was performed, the better chance he had of carrying his wager—whether he brought away with the torn tips portions of the skin. The writhing of the tortured creature was rather an appeal to his deliberate cruelty, and the shrill scream only quickened the process. The back finished and bloody, the belly, snow-white and beautiful, was turned up, the feathers torn away, the breast laid bare, and one wing after the other stripped of every pinion. Nothing in the shape of feathers, in short, was left, except the covering of the head, which resisted his fingers.

“There now is Plato’s definition of a man personified,” said he, as he laughed.

During all this time a lady looked over the parapet. D——t caught her eye red with anger, but he only laughed the louder.

“Now, Hamilton,” said he, “you take the bird, and we mount to the platform. When I give the sign, fling him in, and we shall see how the bet goes.”

They accordingly mounted, and the lady, turning her back, as if she had been unable to bear longer the sight of so much cold cruelty, directed her vision towards the west; but a little boy, who was along with her, seemed to watch the operation.

“Now,” cried D——t.

And Hamilton threw the bird into the sea. The creature, still vivacious, true to its old instinct,

spread out its bare wings in an attempt to fly, but it was vain; down it came sinking below the surface, but rising quickly again to lash, with the bleeding wings, the water on which it used to swim so lightly and elegantly. The struggle between the effort to fly and the tendency to sink was continued for several minutes, its screams bringing closer around it many of its compeers, who looked as if with pity and amazement on the suffering victim, known to them now only by the well-known cry of distress.

Meanwhile these curious students of natural history stood looking over the rail, watch in hand, and the little boy, an important personage in our story, also intent upon the experiment, cried out two solitary words, very simple ones too, and yet fraught with a strange import, as regards consequences, that could not be gathered from them.

"See, ma'."

But the lady to whom they were addressed had still her head turned away.

"Six minutes," cried D—t. "The time is up, and the bird is only this instant down. I win."

"I admit it," responded Hamilton, evidently disconcerted. "I shall pay you to-night at Stewart's at seven o'clock. I got my remittance yesterday."

"Content," said D—t. "That's the third bet I have gained off you within a fortnight."

Hamilton bit his lip and scowled—an act which only roused against him the raillery of his comrades,

who were now collected in a circle, and symptoms of anger of a more expressive kind shewed themselves.

"You have been at this trade of flaying before," said he, looking sternly at D——t. "Your father, like the other West Indians, is well acquainted with the flaying of negroes, and you have been following his example with the Jamaica lungies. But, by G——d," he added, getting enraged, "next time we cross the rapiers of a bet, it shall be for ten times five."

"This instant," answered D——t, on whom the imputations about his father acted as a fiery stimulant.

"Seek your subject," responded Hamilton.

"You see that lady there?" continued the West Indian. "She has a boy with her."

"I do."

"The mother of the boy, or not?" continued D——t. "I say she is; and, in place of fifty, I'll make it a hundred."

"Have you ever seen them before?" asked Hamilton, trying to be calm.

"Never. I know no more of them than you do; and, besides, I give you your choice of mother, or not mother."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Campbell, as he looked intently at D——t. "Are you mad, D——t? Has your last triumph blinded you? The woman is too old by ten years."

Hamilton turned round without saying a word, and drew cautiously near the lady, whose eyes, as she stood looking at a foreign ship coming in, were still scornful, and it seemed as if she waited until some gentleman came up to inform him of the cruel act she had so recently witnessed. Resisting her fiery glances, he surveyed her calmly, looking by turns at her and the boy. A slight smile played on his lip in the midst of the indications of his wrath. One might have read in that expression—

“Not a feature in these two faces in the least similar, and the age is beyond all mortal doubt. I have the gull-flayer on the hip at last.”

And returning to the companions with the same simulated coolness—

“Done for a hundred,” he said. “That lady is not the mother of that boy.”

“Agreed,” answered D——t, with a look of inward triumph. “How to be decided?”

“By the lips of the lady herself.”

“Agreed.”

“Yes,” joined Campbell, “if you can get these lips to move. She looks angry, and now she is moving along probably for home, bequeathing to us the last look of her scorn. We shall give her time to cool down, and Cameron and I will then pay our respects to her. We shall get it out of the boy if she refuse to answer.”

It was as Campbell said. The lady with the boy, who held her by the hand, had begun her



return along the jetty. The companions kept walking behind; and of these, Campbell and D——t fell back a little from the other two.

"Hark, Campbell," said D——t. "Back me against Cameron for any sum you can get out of him. I'm sure of my quarry; and," laughing within the teeth, he added, "I'll gull him again."

"You're ruined, man," whispered his companion. "The woman is evidently too old, and I am satisfied you will catch some of her wrinkles."

A deeper whisper from D——t conveyed to the ear of his friend—

"I heard the boy call her mother."

"The devil!" exclaimed Campbell, in surprise; but, catching himself—"it might have been grandmother he meant."

"No, no. Children in Scotland use grandma', never ma', to grandmother. I'm satisfied; and, if you are not a fool, take advantage of my"—

"Dishonesty," added Campbell.

"No; all fair with that fellow Hamilton. Besides, all bets assume a retention of reasons, otherwise there could be no bets. In addition, I did not assert that I did not hear them address each other."

"That's something," said Campbell. "I do not say it is impossible, or even very improbable, that she may be the mother; and if you will assure me, on your honour, of what you heard, I will have a little speculative speculation on Cameron."

"I can swear; and if I couldn't, do you think I would have bet so high, as in the event of losing I should be ruined?"

"I'm content," said Campbell. "Ho, there, Cameron! I will back D——t on the maternity for ten."

"That will just pay Nightingale," replied Cameron. "I accept. Now for the grand denouement. Let us accost the arbitress of our fortunes."

"Not yet," said Hamilton. "Wait till she gets to the lighthouse, where there are people. It is clear she has not a good opinion of us, and in this solitary place she might get alarmed."

Hanging back to wait their opportunity, now upon the verge of a decision which might be attended with disastrous results to some of them, the whole four appeared absorbed in anxiety. Not a word was spoken; and it seemed possible that, during these trying minutes, a hint would have broken up the imprudent and dangerous compact. The terror of the club was before them, and the false honour which ruled them, in place of obedience to their fathers and humanity to dumb creatures, retained the ascendancy. So has it ever been with the worship of false gods: their exactions have always been in proportion to the folly and credulity of their votaries. The moment was approaching. The die was to carry formidable issues. Dark shadows broke in through the resolution to be brave, as might have been observed in

the features of both the principals. At length Campbell took the lead. They approached the lady, who, at first, seemed to shrink from them as monsters.

"We beg pardon," he said. "Be assured, madam, we have not the most distant intention to offend you. The truth is, that we have a bet among us as to whether you are the mother of this fine boy. We assure you, moreover, that it was the sport of betting that sought out the subject, and the nature of that subject cannot, we presume, be prejudicial either to your honour or your feelings. While I ask your pardon, allow me to add that the wager, foolish or not, is to be decided by your answer, yes or no."

"No."

After pronouncing, with a severe sternness, this monosyllable, she paused a little; and looking round upon the youths with a seriousness and dignity that sat upon her so well that they shrunk from her glance, she added, with a corresponding solemnity—

"Would to God, who sees all things—ay, and punishes all those who are cruel to the creatures He has formed with feelings suitable to their natures, and dear to them as ours are to us—that he who bet upon my being the mother of this boy may be he who tortured the unoffending bird!"

And, with these words, she departed, leaving the bewildered students looking at each other, with

various emotions. It was, perhaps, fortunate for D——t that the little sermon, contrary to the practice of the courts, came after, in place of preceding the condemnation, for he had been rendered all but insensible by the formidable monosyllable. He saw there was some mystery overhanging his present position. He doubted, and he did not doubt the lady; but he heard the boy use the word, and he took up the impression that he was, by some mistake on his part, to be punished for the flaying of the bird. The lady's eye, red and angry, had been fixed upon him, and now, when she was gone, he still saw it. But there were more lurid lights, playing round certain stern facts connected with his fortunes. He must pay this £100 on the decision of her who had burned him with her scorn. There was no relief for him. The club at the College had no mercy, and he had enraged Hamilton, whose spirit was relentless. He had been under rebuke from his father, who had threatened to cut him off; and, worse still, the remnant of the last yearly remittance was £110 in the Royal Bank, while debts stood against him in the books of tailors, confectioners, tavern-keepers, shoemakers—some already in the form of decrees, and one, at least, in the advanced stage of a warrant. To sum up all, he was betrothed to Miss M'——sh, the sister of a Writer to the Signet, who had already hinted doubts as to the propriety of the marriage. He

saw himself, in short, wrecked on the razor-backed shelving rocks of misery. In his extremity, he clutched at a floating weed: the woman, the lady, did not speak the truth. He had ears, and could hear, and he would trust to them. The boy could not be wrong.

"Campbell," he cried, "dog her home—she lies!" Hamilton and Cameron burst out into a laugh, but Campbell had been taken aback by the lady's answer: he had not £10 to pay Cameron, and the fear of the club was before him, with its stern decree of the brand of caste and rejection by his associates. Since the moment of the lady's answer, he had been conscious of obscure doubts as to her truthfulness, clustering round the suspicion that she might have known, by hearing something, that D——t, the gull-flayer, was on the side of the maternity, and that she wanted to punish him—a notion which seemed to be favoured by the somewhat affected manner of her expressing her little sermon. These doubts, fluid and wavering, became, as it were, crystallised by D——t's cry that she was a liar; and, the moment he felt the sharp angles of the idea, he set off after the lady.

This hope, which was nothing more than despair in hysterics, enabled D——t to withstand, for a little, the looks of triumph in Hamilton and Cameron, in spite of their laugh, which still rung in his ears. The sermon had touched him but little, and if he could have got quit of this wildly

contracted debt, he would likely be the same man again. He did not, as yet, feel even the dishonour of having taken advantage of the boy's statement—an act which he had subtlety enough to defend. Give him only relief from this debt, the fire of the club, the stabbing glances of Hamilton's eye. At least he was not bound to suffer the personal expression of his companions' triumph any longer than he could away.

"We will wait the issue of Campbell's inquiry," he said, with affected calmness. "I have a call to make in the Links."

And he was retreating, even as he uttered these words.

"I owe you £5," cried Hamilton, "which, *as a man of honour*, I pay you to-night, at seven o'clock, upon the instant, at Stewart's. I have no wish to be dragged before the club."

With this barb, touched with wararra poison, or ten times distilled kakodyle, and a layer of honey over all, D——t hurried away, to make no call. He was hard to subdue, and a puppy, whose passion it was to strut, in the perfection of a refined toilette, among fashionable street-walkers. While he was abroad, his cares rankling within were overborne by the consciousness of being "in position." The dog's nose is cold even when his tongue is reeking; and, as he walked slowly along, his exterior shewed the proper thermometric nonchalance—it was not the time for a pyrometric measurement

---

within the heart. On his way, he talked to a Leith merchant, who hailed him—yet he exhibited the required *retinu*, so expressive of confidence and ease within, and, withal, so fashionable. You might have said he had the heart to wing a partridge,—to “wing it,” a pretty phrase in the mouth of a polite sportsman, who, if a poacher were to break the bones of his leg, would, in his own case, think it a little different. Yes, D——t might have been supposed to be able to “wing a partridge,”—not to “flay a gull.”

It was while thus “in position”—not its master, but its slave—that curvation of the spine of society, which produces so much paralysis and death—that, when he came to Princes Street, he felt himself constrained and able to walk up South St Andrew Street, direct to the door of the Royal Bank. He even entered, he even drew a draft, he even made that draft £110, all the money he had there in keeping for so many coming wants and exigencies: he even presented it to the teller, who knew his circumstances and his dangers—ay, and his father’s anxieties while he sent the yearly remittance.

“All, Mr D——t?” said the teller, looking blank at the draft.

“All, sir—I require it all,” answered the student, with such a mouthful of the vowel, that we might write the word *requisite*, and not be far from the pronunciation.

The teller gave his head a significant shake. If he had had a tail to shake, and had shaken that tail, it would have been much the same.

Having got the money, he was more than ever under the law of that proclivity, on the rail line to ruin, on which so many young men take stations; and, still retaining his, he went, at the hour of the hot joints, to dine at the Rainbow, where he met many others, in that refreshment house, of the same line of rail, who, like himself, considered—that is, while the money was there—that guineas in the purse supersede the necessity of having ideas in the head. He took to such liquid accompaniments of the dinner, as would confirm the resolution he had formed, of paying at once his debt of honour. And why not? Was not he of that world, whose code of laws draws the legitimate line of distinction between debts contracted to industrious tradesmen, for the necessities of life, and those which are the result of whim, pride, or vindictiveness? All recollections of the flaying of the bird, and of the lady's adjuration to heaven, had given way to the enthusiasm of the noble feeling to obey the dictates of that eternal and immutable code of honour. And by seven o'clock he was at Stewart's, where he found Hamilton and Cameron waiting for their respective "pounds of flesh."

"Here is the £5," cried Hamilton, as he entered; and, throwing the note upon the table, "It is for the gull trick."



"And here," responded the West Indian, "is your £100 for the woman trick."

And he cast from him the bundle of notes, with a grandeur of both honour and defiance. "But I have a reservation to make. Campbell has not reported to me the issue of his commission, and if it shall turn out that the woman retracts, I will reclaim the money."

"And get it, too," said the other, laughing sneeringly, as he counted the notes—"but here comes Campbell."

"Campbell," cried Cameron, as his debtor entered, "I want my £10, to pay Nightingale."

"Ask D——t," said Campbell. "I have been cheated by him. He told me a lie. The woman speaks true, and I shall be revenged."


"I have nothing to do with D——t," answered Cameron. "You are my debtor; and, if I don't get the money to-night—you know my lodgings—the club will decide upon it to-morrow."

And, throwing a withering look upon his old friend—a word now changed for, and lost in that expressive vocable, debtor—he hurried out, followed by Hamilton, who had both his money and his revenge, and wished to be beyond the reach of a recall.

Left to themselves, the two remaining friends—of the hour before, but now no longer friends—looked sternly at each other. The one considered himself duped—the other was burning under the imputation of being a cheat and a liar.

"Oh, I don't retract," said Campbell, with increased fierceness. "It was upon the faith of your word that I ventured the bet against my own convictions. I have traced the lady to Great King Street, where she resides, as the aunt of the boy; and I am satisfied that, in a case where the boy's mother is alive, and now in her own house, he, of the age he is, never could have used the word mother, or mamma, or any word of that import, to his father's sister. All power and energies are comparative. This £10 cracks the spine of my fortune as effectually as ten times the amount. I have not the money, and know no more where to find it, than I do to get hold of the philosopher's stone. I repeat, I have been cheated, and I demand of you the money."

"Which you shall never get," replied D——t. "I can swear that I heard the words. They thrill on my ears now; and the best proof of my conviction is, that I am myself ruined. Yes," and he began to roll his eyes about, as the terrors of his situation came rushing upon him, on the wake of the now departing effects of the Rainbow wine—"Yes, the swell, the fop, the leader of the college *ton*, whose coat came from the artistic study of Willis, whose necktie could raise a *furore*, whose glove, without a wrinkle, would condescend only to be touched by friendship on the tip of the finger, is now at the mercy of any one of twenty sleazy dogs, who can tell the sheriff I owe them



money. Money! why, I have only fifteen pounds in the wide world, and I must pay that to my landlady."

As he uttered these last words, the door opened, and there stood before him a man with a blue coat, surmounted by a red collar. He held a paper in his hand; his demeanour was deferential, and exuberantly polite.

"That sum you have mentioned, sir," he said, looking to the student, "with £10 added, will save you and me much trouble. The debt to Mr R——d is £25; and here is certain paper which gives me the power to do an unpolite thing. You comprehend? I am an advocate for painless operations."

"Will you accept the £15?" said D——t, now scarcely able to articulate.

"Yes, if this gentleman, here, who is, I presume, your friend, will kindly add the £10. The expenses may stand."

Campbell could only grin at this strange conversation.

"Unwilling?" continued the messenger. "Ah, I see. It is strange that when I devote myself to a gentleman, his friends fly away. This is my misfortune. Well, there is no help for it. We must take a walk to the Calton," addressing himself to his debtor. "You are a gentleman, and I shall be your servant, in livery."

D——t braced himself with a violent effort, like a spasm, and took his hat.

"Give me the £10," said Campbell. "It will make no difference now. There are no degrees in despair."

"I must take care of my master's money," said the officer, with an attempt at a smile—and without going the full length of imitating that most philanthropic of all executors of the law, Simpson, who patted his victims on the back while he adjusted the rope—he added, "and now, sir, I am at your humble service."


In a very short time after, the strange events of that day were terminated by the young man being placed in the debtors' prison of the Calton. Like other jail birds, he at first shunned his brethren in misfortune—fleeing to his room, and shrouding himself in solitude and partial darkness. The change from a life of gaiety, if not dissipation, to the experiences of prison squalor, had come upon him without preparation—if, indeed, preparation for evil ever diminishes or much ameliorates the inevitable effects of the visitation. Unfortunates exhibit wonderful diversities in their manifestations. D——t became dejected, broken in spirits, sad, and remorseful. He scarcely stirred from the bed on which he had thrown himself when he entered; and his mind became a theatre, where strange plays were acted, and strange personages performed strange parts, under the direction of stage managers over whom he had no control. Though some unhappy predecessor, in the same cell, had scribbled on the wall—

“A prison is a cannie place,  
Though viewed with reprobation ;  
Where cheats and thieves, and scants o’ grace,  
Find time for cogitation ;”

he did not find that he could properly cogitate or meditate, even if he had been, which he never was, a thinker. All his thoughts were reduced to a continued wild succession of burning images—the mild face of his mother, so far away, as it smiled upon him when he ran about among the cane groves of the west ; the negroes, with their “young massa” on their tongues, jabbering their affection ; his father scowling upon him as undutiful ; another, not so far away, in whose eyes—beautiful to him—love dwelt as his worshipper—looking all endearment, only the next moment to cast upon him the withering glance of her contempt, if not hatred ; admirers, toadies, satellites, and sycophants, all there in groups, and in succession, beslabbering him with praises, then exploding in peals of laughter. Nor was another awanting in these saturnalia—the form and face of her, whose one word of sentence had been to him as a doom, and who fixed that doom in his soul by her red glance of reproof. Seemingly very indifferent objects assumed in the new lights of his spirit, gigantic and affraying features—the sea-gull, with its torn back, bleeding and quivering, and those diamond eyes so bright, even in its looks of agony—an object low, indeed, in the scale of nature, but here elevated, by

some overruling power, into the very heart of man's actions and destinies, as if to shew out of what humble things the lightnings of retribution may come. Nay, these diamond eyes haunted him; they were everywhere in these saturnalian reveries, following every recurring image as an inevitable concomitant, which he had no power to drive away—entering into the orbits of the personages, gleaming out of the heads of negroes, that of his father, that of his mother, even that of his mistress, imparting to the looks and glances of the latter, a brilliancy which enhanced beauty, while it sharpened them into poignancy. But, most of all, were they in some way associated with the form of the unknown lady. She never appeared to him as the being on whom his destiny was suspended, but, sooner or later, her own comparatively lustreless orbs changed into those diamonds, which could fulminate scorn, not less than they could beam out supplication.

For several days and nights he had scarcely any intervals of peace from these soul-penetrating fancies, and these moments were due to visits; but who came to visit? Not the Writer to the Signet, the brother of his affianced, whom he had expected to see first of all,—as a friend, if not as a relation, ready to extend the hand that would save him—not any of those with whom he had shared the folly of extravagance, if not dissipation, on whom he had lavished favours in the wildness of



his generosity. The first was felicitating himself on his sister's escape—the latter received the lesson that teaches prudence, *a la distance*. His only visitors were one or two heads of families, where he had been received as a fashionable friend, and these came only to look and inquire. Their curiosity was satisfied when they got out of him the amount of his debt, and pleased when they considered that their daughters were at home, and under no chance of becoming allied to a prisoner. One or two old associates, too, paid their respects to him, but they were of those who had resisted his fascinations, and found their pleasures in their studies. We seek for the virtues, but we do not always find them in the high places, where masks, copied from them, and bearing their beautiful lineaments and their effulgence, are worn in their stead only to cover the vices which are their very antipodes. No; more often in lowlier regions, lying *perdu* behind vices, not voluntary, but often, as it were, inflicted, and peering out, ashamed to be seen, because arrayed in the rags of poverty. A solitary female stole in to him. Who was she? One with whom he had formed a connection of not an honourable kind, only now interrupted by the walls of the prison? No. One whom he had long before cast off, only because the vice he had inoculated her with, had cast off the beauty that had inflamed him. Nor did he know the meaning of that stealthy visit, which lasted only for a few

minutes—so unexpected, for he had not seen her during many months—so singular, so unnatural, so unlike the world, returning gratitude for injury, benediction for infamy, until, after she had suddenly slipped away, he found, by the side of the wall, a small bottle of wine. That form and face, once more beautiful, in his estimation, than were those, even now, of his honourable affianced, entered among the imagery of his reveries; but the diamond eyes never displaced those of her gentle nature. He had wronged her, but they never filled with the fire of denunciation. She had looked her grief at him only through the tears he had raised in them, and had never attempted to dry. Yes, the diamond eyes entered everywhere, and into every form but that one where the red heat of revenge might have been expected to shrivel up and harden the issues of tears.

Further on in the same evening, the jailer, a good-natured sort of fellow, came into him while he was absorbed in these thoughts. He was at the time sitting on his bed.

“A lady called in the dusk,” he said, “and inquired if it was true you were here. I told her it was.”

“And what more?” asked the youth, as he started out of his day-dream. “But, stay—what like was she?”

“I could scarcely see her,” replied the man; “middling tall, rather young, as I thought—with



a veil, through which I could see a pair of pretty, bright eyes."

"Were they like diamonds?" cried the student, absolutely forgetting that he was speaking to an ordinary mortal about very ordinary things.

"Ha, ha! I never saw diamond eyes," answered the jailer; "but I've seen glass ones in a doll's head looking very bright. Why, you 'aven't got mad, like some of the chicken-hearted birds in our cage?"

"Yes," cried the youth, "I'm frantic-mad; but, stay, have patience. Did she want to see me?"

"Yes, she asked if she could; but when I told her she might, she seemed to get afeard to come into a jail, and said she would call again to-morrow night, at the same hour."

"Can you tell me nothing more of what she was like?—not she who was here this evening?"

"Why, no; don't you think I know her kind? Oh, we see many o' them. They stick closest to the unfortunate—but 'tis because they are unfortunate themselves. Common thing, sir. Never feel for others till we have something to feel for ourselves. The visitor is a lady, sir."

"Can you tell me nothing more?" said the student, eagerly. "How was she dressed?"

"A large, elegant cloak, sir—can scarcely say more."

"Was it trimmed with fur?"

"Not sure—but now, when I think, there was

some lightish trimming—I mean, lighter than the cloak.”

“And the bonnet?”

“Why, I think velvet; but you’ll maybe see ner yourself to-morrow. The like o’ her may do you good. The unfortunates who stick so close to the unfortunate do no good—they’re a plaster that don’t cure.”

“It is Maria!” ejaculated D——t, as the jailer shut the door. “She feels for me, and has come spite of her hard-hearted brother. Her diamond eyes are of another kind. They speak wealth, and love to bestow it. Her fortune is her own, and, with that, I may yet turn that wayward destiny, and laugh at my persecutors.”

That ray of hope, illuminating his soul, changed almost in an instant the whole tenor of his mind. It might be compared to a stream of nervous energy, emanating from the brain, and shooting down through the network of chords, confirming convulsed muscles, and imparting to trembling members consistency of action and graces of motion. His reveries were scared by it, as owls under the influence of a sunbeam, and retreated into the dark recesses from which they had been charmed by the enchantment of despair. The personages of these visions were no longer avengers, casting upon him the burning beams of the diamond eyes. They were hopeful, pitiful; the flatterers and fawners were at their old work again, and

pleasure, with her siren face, smiled blandishments on him. Then he would justify the favours of the heaven he made for himself. He would be a logician, for once, in that kind of dialectics called the "wish-born."

"What was I afraid of?" he said to himself. "There is no turpitude, no shame in a fair bet. I was worsted in an honourable contest. What crazy power mocked me into the belief that all this that has befallen me was connected with the flaying of a bird? Don't we break the necks of innocent, yea, gentle fowls, not depredators like gulls, every day for our dinners? And don't ladies, as delicate as the unknown censor who dared to chastise me with her eyes, eat of the same, with a relish delightful to the tongues that pronounce the fine words of pity and philanthropy? But, even admitting there was cruelty in the act, where is the link that binds it with the consequences which have brought me here? The bet upon the maternity was not an effect of the flaying of the bird. If it followed the prior bet, it would have followed another, in which I was gainer, equally the same. The mad energy which weaves in my head these day-dreams, and pursues me with these diamond eyes of wrath, is a lying power, and I shall master it by the strength of my reason, which, at least, is God's gift. Come, my Maria, as my good angel, and enable me to free my mind from illusions. I will sit and look into your eyes

as I have done so often. Yes, I will satisfy myself that they shine still with the lustre of love, hope, and happiness; and, oh, let these, and these only, enter into my dreams."

And thus he satisfied himself, as all do, whose hope weaves the syllogisms of their wishes, and sits to see pleasure caught on the wing. The day passed apace to usher in the evening with its messenger of peace. Where, in that squalid place, would he seat her, whose peculiar province was the drawing-room? How would he receive her first look of sympathy? how repay it? with what words express his emotions? with what fervour kiss those lips, redolent of forgiveness? with what ecstasy look into those eyes refulgent with love. He would control himself, and be calm. He would rehearse, that he might not fail in the forms of an interview on which hung his destiny—almost his life. The hour of seven arrived. He heard the heavy foot of the jailer come tramp, tramp, along the lobby. There was a softer step behind, as if the echo of the heavier tread. A stern voice and a softer one mingled their notes. The door opened.

"My Mar——! O God! these scornful eyes again."

"Not scornful now," replied the soft voice of a woman, as she came forward, and stood before him in the dusk.

"Were there light enough," she continued, "I would lift my veil and shew you that they are

capable of a kindlier light, than even that they now carry, for the offering I made to Heaven has been more than answered."

"Ah, you come to retract," he said; "to speak the truth at last. It is not too late to say you *are* the mother—the mother of the boy—nor need you be ashamed; there may be reasons—but many a woman lives to repent"—

"Hold, sir," she cried, with indignation, as she fixed upon him a look even more penetrating than that he so well remembered. "I have nothing to retract—nothing to be ashamed of. I came here out of pure sympathy, to make amends, to one who has fallen, for a prayer which burst from me in my anger. Your friend, who called for me, told me that you were a prisoner, and that your imprisonment was the consequence of the wager, which it fell to me to decide. I did not come to repeat to you what I said before, that I am not the mother of the boy, but to make an explanation."

"And I have one to ask," said he.

"I am ready to answer."

"How could I be deceived?" said he. "I heard the boy address you as his mother."

"And that is what I came to explain. I have taxed my memory since Mr Campbell insisted, in my presence, that Frederick did address me in the manner you have stated. Shall I tell you the precise words he used?"

"I wait for them."

"Well, they were, 'see ma'.'"

"The very words—and were they not enough for proof and belief?"

"Yes, sir; but there are words which have two significations. Ma' is the contraction, as you know, for *mamma*, but it is pronounced the same as *maw*, which is a word which we use to designate those birds, otherwise called gulls. I recollect that while I was unable to bear the sight of the tortured bird, and had turned my head in another direction, my nephew kept looking over the rails, and that, as he saw the struggling creature, he cried out to me the words you misconstrued. And thus the mystery is cleared up."

"Miserable and fatal error," he gasped out, as he staggered back. "And the connexion!—the connexion! There *was* retribution in those diamond eyes."

"What mean you, sir?"

"The bird's eyes, that haunt me in my reveries, and enter into the sockets of my dream-beings!"

"Are you mad?"

"No; or the heavens are mad, with their swirling orbs and blazing comets, that rush sighing through space before some terrible power that will give them no respite, except with the condition, that when they rest, they die."

"Poor youth! so early doomed—I pity you."

"Ay, pity those who have no pity—those are the truly wretched; for pity, in the world's life, is

the soul of reason's action. Ah, madam, it is those who have pity who do not need the pity of others, for they are generally free from the faults that produce the unhappiness that needs pity."

"But you have been punished, I admit, in a very strange and mysterious way; for the word used by the boy was the joining link of the two transactions, and you were led to misconstrue it—ay, and to take advantage of your misconstruction to get the better of your friend."


"I see it all."

"But I say you have been punished," continued she, consolingly; "and I perceive you are penitent,—perhaps justice is satisfied; and when you are liberated you may be the better for the lesson. I shall now reverse my prayer, and say to one I shall perhaps never see again, may God deal mercifully by you."

And, with these words, she retreated. But her prayer was never answered, so far as man can judge of Heaven's mysterious ways. The conviction settled down and down into his heart, that that apparently simple affair of killing a bird, which, even with the aggravation of all the cruelty exhibited by the thoughtless, yet certainly pitiless youth, is so apt to be viewed carelessly, or only with an avowal of disapprobation—which, if too much insisted on as an act to be taken up by superior retribution, is more apt still to be laughed at, was the cause of all the ills that had befallen

him. The diamond eyes proved to him no fancy. But, for all this, we are afforded, by what subsequently occurred, some means of explanation, which will be greedily laid hold of by minute philosophers. Even then it was to have been feared that the seeds of consumption had been deposited in favourable soil. In our difficulties about explanations of mental phenomena, we readily flee to diseases of the body, which, after all, only removes the mystery a step or two back in the dark.

It remains for me to add some words of personal experience. A considerable period after these occurrences, I had occasion—by a connexion with a medium through which D——t received from his father, whose fortunes had in the meantime failed, a petty allowance—to be the bearer to him, now liberated, of a quarter's payment. I forget the part of the old town where I found him, but I have a distinct remembrance of the room. It was a garret, almost entirely empty. He was lying on a kind of bed spread upon the floor. There was a small grate, with a handful of red cinders in it; only one chair, and a pot, or pan, or two. There was a woman moving between him and the fireplace, as if she had been preparing some warm drink or medicine of some kind for him. I did not know then, but I knew afterwards, that that woman was she who called upon him in prison, and deposited the small bottle of wine. Her love for him had always overcome any of those feelings





of enmity, or something stronger, generally deemed so natural in one who has been robbed of her dearest treasure, and ruined. She alone had, indeed, not assumed the diamond eyes. The diamonds were elsewhere, — yea, in her heart, where she nourished pity for him who had so cruelly deserted her, and left her to a fate so common, and requiring only a hint to be understood, by those who know the nature of women. After he had got out of prison, she sought him out, got the room for him, collected the paltry articles, procured food for him, and continued to nurse him till his death, with all the tenderness of a lover, who had not only not been cast off, but cherished. He betrayed the ordinary symptoms of consumption, and the few words he muttered were those of thanks. I think he was buried in the Canongate Churchyard.

THE END.

THIRD EDITION.

---

## WALLACE AND HIS TIMES.

By JAMES PATERSON,

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY AND FAMILIES OF AYRSHIRE," ETC.

Fcp. 8vo, cloth extra, price 3s. 6d.

---

THIS work is embellished with a portrait of Wallace, from an ancient painting at Niddrie House, near Edinburgh; and not only gives an accurate narrative of the events in the great patriot's career, as related by Blind Harry, but reduces the more important facts—many of which have been disputed—to chronological order, and proves their accuracy from internal evidence, contemporary chronicles, and existing documents. The author, in short, presents the work of the Minstrel in a new light, claiming judgment upon it not as a *historical*, but a *biographical* poem.

---

"The author, who has long given his attention to Scottish history, has made the most of the materials at his command, and has produced a biographical sketch, if not of high literary merit, at least possessing much interest for the reader."—*Edinburgh Advertiser*.

"In short, as Blind Harry says that he rendered into vernacular verse

'The Latin buk,

Quhilk Maister Blair in his tym undyrtuk,'

so Mr Paterson, with equal diligence, has turned again into modern prose the poem of the old Minstrel, enriching the narrative with every detail he can collect from other sources, occasionally, as in the Fawdoun story, making allowances for poetic imagination, but on the whole stoutly defending tradition against the scepticism of modern historians. He has thus compiled a very consistent and regular biography of the hero, whose career, if somewhat mythical in this shape, is yet one of those which exercise a healthy influence upon national character. This task, we say, Mr Paterson has accomplished with considerable success, and his volume will be thankfully received as containing a complete and well-written summary of all that is to be found in the old chronicles concerning the Knight of Ellerslie."—*Courant*.

---

THE

## LIFE AND POEMS OF WILLIAM DUNBAR,

The Burns of the Sixteenth Century.

Printed from the Original Manuscripts, and Modernised so as to be intelligible to the Reader of the Present Day.

By JAMES PATERSON, Author of "Wallace and His Times," &c.

In Crown 8vo, cloth extra, price 3s. 6d.

EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.

Cheap and Elegant Editions  
OF  
**STANDARD WORKS,**

ADMIRABLY ADAPTED FOR GIFTS, SCHOOL PRIZES, AND GENERAL  
CIRCULATION,

Beautifully printed in Demy 18mo, with a Fine Engraving, and neatly bound in cloth,  
**PRICE ONE SHILLING EACH,**

Or, on Fine Paper, bound in cloth extra,  
**ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE EACH.**

*Larger Editions of the Same Works, in Fcap. 8vo, handsomely bound in cloth,  
gilt, and gilt edges, price 2s. 6d. each.*

**VOLUMES ALREADY PUBLISHED.**

**EVENINGS at HOME**; or, The Juvenile Budget Opened.  
By Dr AIKEN and Mrs BARBAULD.

**GOLDSMITH'S VICAR of WAKEFIELD, POEMS, and  
ESSAYS**; with Life of the Author.

**THE HISTORY of SANDFORD and MERTON**; A Moral  
and Instructive Lesson for Young Persons. By THOMAS DAY.

**THE FABLES of ÆSOP**; with Instructive Applications, by  
SAMUEL CROKALL, D.D.; to which is added, a Collection of Moral and Entertain-  
ing Anecdotes.

**GEMS from the SPECTATOR**: Being a Selection of the most  
Choice Tales and Sketches from that Remarkable Book.

**THE LIFE and ADVENTURES of ROBINSON CRUSOE.**  
By DANIEL DE FOE. With a Life of the Author.

**THE POEMS and SONGS of ROBERT BURNS.** With a  
Complete Glossary.

**BLIND HARRY'S LIFE and HEROIC ACHIEVEMENTS**  
of SIR WILLIAM WALLACE; and the **LIFE of ROBERT BRUCE**, King of  
Scotland.

In Crown 8vo, printed on Fine Paper, with Border Lines in Red, and elegantly bound  
in cloth extra, gilt, and gilt edges, price 7s. 6d.; or in Turkey morocco extra,  
or antique, price 12s. 6d.,

**THE POETICAL WORKS OF  
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.**

NEW EDITION, COMPLETE.

With Fine Portrait on Steel, and beautiful Illustrations.

\*.\* This is a most beautiful and portable edition of the complete Poetical Works of  
this favourite author.

**EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.**

In Fcp. 8vo, bound in cloth extra, First and Second Series, price 2s. 6d. each,

## SELECTIONS

FROM

## THE BRITISH POETS:

BEING GEMS FROM THE WORKS OF THE MOST CELEBRATED POETS OF  
GREAT BRITAIN, AMERICA, AND THE CONTINENT.

Chronologically arranged, commencing with Chaucer, and following down  
to our own time.

Price 2s. 6d., Fcp. 8vo, cloth, Second Edition,

## WILLIAM PATERSON.

THE MERCHANT STATESMAN, AND FOUNDER OF THE BANK OF  
ENGLAND.

### HIS LIFE AND TRIALS.

By S. BANNISTER, M.A.

"William Paterson was among the wisest men of his age, and this biography is a fitting memorial of his patriotism and genius. . . . This biography, intrinsically valuable and interesting to all classes, is peculiarly welcome as a book for the instruction and encouragement of the young."—*The Leader*.

In Fcp. 8vo, cloth extra, price 3s.,

## THE BORDER ANGLER:

A GUIDE-BOOK TO THE TWEED AND ITS TRIBUTARIES, AND THE OTHER  
STREAMS COMMANDED BY THE NORTH BRITISH RAILWAY.

WITH AN ACCURATE MAP OF THE DISTRICT.

"A very useful manual is here offered to all those votaries of the 'gentle craft' who ply their vocation on the storied banks of the Tweed and Teviot and their numerous tributaries. All the particulars essential to the guidance of the angler are here set down—the characteristics of the different streams, the open and close waters, and the most effective modes of fishing. A map, evidently constructed with much care, faces the title-page, and shews the locality of his operations."—*The Courier*.

"A pleasant, breezy, rippling—somewhat lazy—book. . . . In addition to knowledge and love of his subject, the author has an over-present sense of humour, . . . and exceedingly good literary taste and skill. . . . The book is not only pleasant reading, but it gives useful guidance to a large class, placed in somewhat new circumstances—to anglers whose residences are in towns, but in towns having railways that lead to the hills and the waters."—*The Scotsman*.

"This book is written evidently with the intention not so much of telling persons how to angle as where to angle. It is what it professes to be—a guide-book. Its author is a skilful writer, and we have no doubt he is equally skilful as an angler.

He has an eye for all that is beautiful and romantic within the precincts of the various burns, lochs, 'casts,' rivers, and 'waters' to which he calls attention; and while guiding the stranger, he has original angling stories to tell, and the modern instances, bits of songs, and the profound sayings and doings of Border-angling oracles to retail. . . . The book is altogether clever and instructive, bearing evidence of being written by one so much a master of the subject that he can play with it."—*The Field* (London).

"As a topographical guide for Border anglers, and an adviser for brethren of the rod generally, this volume is in every way satisfactory. . . . The volume possesses an excellent map of the Border streams, roads, and railways. Volume and map will be found suitable to anglers of all ages."—*The Athenæum*.

EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.

Price 1s., Fcp. 8vo, cloth, or cloth extra, gilt edges, 1s. 6d., Second Edition,

## GATHERED GEMS

FROM THE ORATIONS OF THE REV. EDWARD IRVING.

Systematically arranged.

Price 2s. 6d., Fcp. 8vo, cloth extra, Second Edition, with numerous Illustrations,

## THE SEA-SIDE AND AQUARIUM;

OR, ANECDOTE AND GOSSIP ON MARINE ZOOLOGY.

By JOHN HARPER.

"Many thanks to you for your 'Sea-side and Aquarium.' I have been delighted—quite delighted—with your most lively and admirably executed production."—*Extract from a Letter to the Author from the Rev. Dr Guthrie of Edinburgh.*

"As a book for the sea-side, we do not know one we could more cordially recommend."—*Witness.*

"We have read this book with intense interest."—*Glasgow Examiner.*

"Mr Harper photographs the tinted world under the sea-surface, and contrives to render even periwinkles attractive."—*The Leader.*

Price 3s. 6d., 12mo, cloth extra, Third Edition, with Illustrations,

## TALES OF

## THE DESERT AND THE BUSH.

By FREDERICK GERSTACKER,

Author of "The Feathered Arrow," "Wild Sports in the Far West," &c. &c.

"Full of thrilling adventure, and intensely readable."

### NEW TALE BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GREEN HAND."

In Crown 8vo, cloth, price 10s. 6d.,

## HINCHBRIDGE HAUNTED:

A COUNTRY STORY.

By GEORGE CUPPLES, Esq., Author of "The Green Hand," "The Two Frigates," &c.

With Frontispiece and Vignette by the Author.

"'Hinchbridge Haunted' is a most amusing production. Mr Cupples affects no pedantry of tone, aims at nothing more than telling a story, and he succeeds so well, that the book once commenced will assuredly be read through."—*Morning Post.*

"A story so fascinating that it is difficult to lay down the volume when once opened."—*The Press.*

"This is by far the best book Mr Cupples has written. . . . It contains many clever passages, and is thoroughly amusing."—*The Scotsman.*

"Mr Cupples is a perfect master of his art: his creation of the village innkeeper Muggops, and the waiting-man Solomon, stamp his book with originality."—*St James's Chronicle.*

"The author has abundant opportunities for exhibiting that vein of comic humour which all acquainted with his former works well know him to possess."—*Edinburgh Courant.*

EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.

In Royal 4to, price 6s.,

## THE WHISKY DEMON;

OR, THE DREAM OF THE REVELLER.

By CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D.

Illustrated with numerous full-page Suggestive Designs, by WATTS PHILLIPS.

"Since George Cruikshank first employed his genius to illustrate the history of 'The Bottle,' nothing more graphic or telling, than these scenes, painted by Watts Phillips, has appeared. We wish the volume, because it deserves it, a wide circulation."—*Scottish Press*.

"Since the publication of Cruikshank's 'Bottle,' we have seen nothing to compare with these illustrations of 'The Whisky Demon.' Every one of these designs tells its own sad tale, points its moral, and reads its lesson trumpet-tongued. Every temperance committee in the country ought at least to have a copy, and it would be well if a copy were found on the table of every reading-room in town and country. It deserves a place in every family circle."—*Glasgow Commonwealth*.

"Of transcendent beauty and excellence. . . . The volume is admirably adapted for the drawing-room or parlour, and we would recommend all the friends of the great and growing temperance movement to promote its circulation to the utmost of their power."—*Weekly Journal*.

Price 4s., Crown 8vo, cloth antique, red edges, Sixth Edition,

## THE MANUAL OF FAMILY AND PRIVATE DEVOTION; CONSISTING OF PRAYERS ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

By the REV. JAMES COCHRANE, A.M.

With a Preface by the late Rev. Dr CHALMERS.

Price 1s., Fcp. 8vo, cloth, Second Edition,

## THE ORIGIN OF THE SCOTS AND THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGE.

By JAMES PATTERSON, Author of "Wallace and His Times," &c. &c.

"Well worth the perusal of all who take an interest in the language of our country."

Price 8s. 6d., Fcp. 8vo, cloth extra,

## CURIOUS STORIED TRADITIONS OF SCOTTISH LIFE.

By ALEXANDER LEIGHTON, Editor and one of the Authors of "The Border Tales."

EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.

# THE CHEAPEST AND BEST SERIES OF SCHOOL BOOKS IN THE WORLD.

## THE IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOL BOOKS, NEW AND IMPROVED EDITIONS,

Uniform Fcp. 8vo, strongly bound in cloth, lettered.

The following references were made to the books published by the Commissioners of National Education, in the debate in the House of Lords, 7th March 1853 :—

*The Earl of Eglinton* must say that the books which were used in the National Schools were the very best that could be put into the hands of the children who received instruction in any schools.

*The Bishop of Limerick*—With respect to the books which were used in the National Schools, he believed that they were admitted upon all hands to be incomparable. They were works which enjoyed a European reputation. They had found their way to every quarter of the globe, and had stamped upon them indelibly their character for excellence.

*The Earl of Derby* said, that the school books introduced by the Board of National Education were most valuable, that they were admirable in point of selection, that they contained a vast amount of useful information, and that they were models of elementary books.

First Book of Lessons.  
Second Book of Lessons.  
Sequel No. I. to Second Book of Lessons.  
Sequel No. II. to Second Book of Lessons.  
Third Book of Lessons.  
Fourth Book of Lessons.  
Supplement to Fourth Book.  
Fifth Book of Lessons.  
Reading-Book for Female Schools.  
Selections from British Poets, in 2 volumes.  
Scripture Lessons, in 4 volumes—  
    Old Testament in 2 vols. New Testament, in 2 vols.  
English Grammar.  
Key to Exercises in the English Grammar.

### Geography.

Epitome of Geographical Knowledge.  
Compendium of Geography.

### Arithmetic and Book-keeping.

First Book of Arithmetic.  
Key to the First Book of Arithmetic.  
Treatise on Arithmetic in Theory and Practice.  
Key to the Treatise on Arithmetic in Theory and Practice.  
Elements of Book-keeping.  
Key to Elements of Book-keeping.

### Mensuration and Geometry.

Treatise on Mensuration.  
Appendix to Treatise on Mensuration.  
Elements of Geometry.

EDINBURGH: W. P. NIMMO, 2 ST DAVID STREET.







ND BY \*  
GRAY  
HIBCH

